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LOVE-IN-A-MIST

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LOVE-IN-A-MIST

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

AMÉLIE RIVES AND GILBERT EMERY, pseud.
Emery Bensley, Fottle

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GILBERT EMERY

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The following is a copy of program of the first performance of "LOVE-IN-A-MIST" as produced at the Gaiety Theatre week beginning Monday, April 12, 1926:

CHARLES L. WAGNER

Presents

MADGE KENNEDY

in

LOVE-IN-A-MIST

594685

A New Comedy by

AMÉLIE RIVES (Princess Troubetzkoy) and

GILBERT EMERY

With

SIDNEY BLACKMER and TOM POWERS

Cast of Characters

(In the order of their appearance)

DIANA WYNNE	<i>Madge Kennedy</i>
GREGORY FARNHAM	<i>Sidney Blackmer</i>
COUNT SCIPIONE VARELLI	<i>Tom Powers</i>
SIDNEY ROSE WYNNE	<i>Frieda Innes</i>
ANNA MOORE WYNNE	<i>Alice John</i>
KIZZY	<i>Mary Marble</i>
COLIN	<i>Jack Willard</i>

ACT I. "Wynnewood," the house of Diana Wynne, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, between Monticello and Castle Hill. An evening in May.

ACT II. Fifteen minutes later.

ACT III. Three weeks later. An afternoon in June.

Trunch #1, 32
SEP 11 1946

"O what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!"

CHARACTERS

MISS DIANA WYNNE, *twenty-seven or twenty-eight, very beautiful, charming and sophisticated.*

MISS SYDNEY ROSE WYNNE, *twenty, very pretty.*

MISS ANNA MOORE WYNNE, *forty-five, sympathetic, well-bred.*

COUNT SCIPIONE VARELLI, *twenty-two or twenty-three, young, attractive.*

MR. GREGORY FARNHAM, *thirty-five, good-looking, charming.*

KIZZY, *a colored maid.*

COLIN, *a colored gardener.*

TIME: *The present. Early summer evening. Eight o'clock.*

PLACE: *"Wynnewood" — The home of DIANA WYNNE, in The Blue Ridge, Virginia, not far from Monticello and Castle Hill.*

LOVE-IN-A-MIST

ACT I

The rising curtain discloses the delightful old drawing-room of Wynnewood. It is filled with charming pieces of English and early American furniture (come down from several generations of Wynnes), family portraits, books,—all the worn, loved, and cherished possessions of a group of gentlefolk who have lived long and, on the whole, pleasantly, in one spot.

The room is softly lighted at the moment by electric lamps. Through the three large, open French windows at the back one sees the fine lawn with its flower beds and hedges in a flood of moonlight. The ivory wainscotted room has a door on the left leading into a hall which runs through the house. On the right is a fireplace.

SYDNEY ROSE, a charming young girl of twenty, is playing idly on the piano, bits of the "Tristan and Isolde" love-music. MISS ANNA MOORE WYNNE, middle-aged, impressive, inconsequent, voluble, romantically sentimental and most kind-hearted and well-bred, is standing in the open window looking out at the lovely night. An after-dinner coffee service is on a tray on the center table.

MISS WYNNE. (*Romantically*) How beautiful this night is! How supremely beautiful! Sydney Rose, isn't it lovely?

SYDNEY. Isn't what what?

MISS WYNNE. (*Coming into the room*) The night, good gracious! Lovely,—the dear night.

SYDNEY. Oh,—yes.

MISS WYNNE. You say “yes” just as if I had asked you is this the night you are going to be hanged! Sydney Rose, have you finished your coffee?

SYDNEY. Darling, I don’t want any coffee. In fact, if you’ll believe me, I don’t know *what* I want! (*She rises, crosses to the left and switches on the lights of the crystal chandelier and wall brackets over the fireplace. Resumes her playing.*)

MISS WYNNE. I spend my life trying to be a good aunt to you two girls,—to prepare you for what you think you want. But I must say this last year has taxed me. Diana is behaving in a most extraordinary way. Look at her out there. (*Indicating DIANA in the garden, who is not visible to the audience.*) All stark alone—night after night—like a—well, whatever it is that sits alone by itself in the moonlight.

SYDNEY. A mushroom, darling?

MISS WYNNE. Don’t be silly! I must say, Sydney Rose, I don’t find your behaviour much better than Di’s. Moping—that’s the word! Ever since we returned from Italy last August you’ve moped.

SYDNEY. I love the way you say *moped*, Annie Moore. M-O-ped! It sounds as if I were a cow.

MISS WYNNE. Well, after all, there is nothing more restful than a nice, Swiss cow. I’m at my wits’ end about you both.

SYDNEY. Poor dear, darling Annie Moore! You’ll pull us through somehow.

MISS WYNNE. For Heaven’s sake, stop playing “Tristan,” stop!

SYDNEY. (*Stopping the piano*) Why?

MISS WYNNE. I think that music is entirely too . . . too sexy.

SYDNEY. Sweetie Pie! Sexy!

MISS WYNNE. I perfectly realize what a horrible word it is, but I can't seem to find any other that means the same thing. Wagner is so—so poignant. Perhaps a little Schumann would be safer.

SYDNEY. Who wants to be safer?

MISS WYNNE. A night like this simply renders one speechless, doesn't it? You can't say a word, can you? (*Walks about room—stops by window where a green parrot sits on a wire perch.*) It makes us wish we were in Italy, doesn't it, Loretto? (*Turning to SYDNEY*) Loretto says yes.

SYDNEY. Do you expect me to say yes, like Loretto?

MISS WYNNE. I must say, Sydney Rose, I think the Italians are very charming people, don't you?

SYDNEY. Are they?

MISS WYNNE. Are they? I should think *you* ought to know! When Carolyn Mason married Varelle I said to her, "My dear, I disapprove of all foreigners as husbands, but this Varelle creature is the most attractive man I ever met,"—and he was. And a nicer boy than their son, Scippi Varelle, never was born in *any* language! Don't you think so, Sydney Rose?

SYDNEY. (*Trying to seem casual*) Oh, yes, Scippi is a nice boy.

MISS WYNNE. Sydney Rose, *my* belief is that Scippi fell head over heels in love with Diana when we were all in Italy last Summer. Did that ever occur to *you*?

SYDNEY. A lot of things have occurred to me. Somebody is always falling in love with someone, especially with Cousin Di.

MISS WYNNE. A blind man could see that. Sometimes I feel as if I were living on a volcano.

SYDNEY. I wish I could get that feeling, too, but I just don't seem to have any luck.

MISS WYNNE. Speaking of volcanos reminds me of that dreadful Wyatt woman. Fancy shingling one's hair at fifty as she's done!

SYDNEY. I expect at that age it's the only thing one has left to try.

MISS WYNNE. I suppose you remember Diana said we'd lunch with her on Wednesday?

SYDNEY. Well, she now says we're not going.

MISS WYNNE. Not going?

SYDNEY. She's writing a nice little note.

MISS WYNNE. I ask you!

SYDNEY. Oh, I'm fed up with Di's nice excuses. It's rotten to behave like that.

MISS WYNNE. I know. O dear, O dear, O dear. And Di's so perfect in most ways.

SYDNEY. That's just it. Annie Moore, I love Di. She's been more like a sister than a cousin to me. Ever since Daddy's death she's made this house my home just as if it really were mine.

MISS WYNNE. Oh, Di is wonderful to us all.

SYDNEY. Yes, Di is wonderful to us all, to everybody. Only—I don't know—Oh, hang it, this never telling an unpleasant truth to anybody—it's——

MISS WYNNE. I know, dear! She gets it, thank God, from her mother, not from my brother. The mess Maria has made of things! Five years after my brother's death I said to her, "Don't second-marry George Willing, my dear. You'll regret it bitterly." But she would. And she did. And she has. And all because she hadn't the courage to tell him she didn't really love him. The idea of marrying a man just out of politeness!

SYDNEY. I fancy it's discouraging enough to marry one for love. (*Going toward door.*) Let's hike out and have a look at the lady-moon, dear. Shall we?

MISS WYNNE. Yes, dear, let us. Perhaps we shall see a—I never can remember the names of

those strange, darling, little Irish creatures that run about so in the shadows. What are they, dear?

SYDNEY. Politicians, I expect.

MISS WYNNE. Goose! Sydney Rose, speaking of moonlight, I wish Gregory Farnham would come back. I've got a kind of psychic feeling that, if he did, everything would be all right with Diana.

SYDNEY. Well—he *is* back!

MISS WYNNE. (*In amazement*) Good heavens! Is he? Does Diana know?

SYDNEY. I don't think so. She made me promise never to speak of him to her—so I—— Anyway I only heard it today.

MISS WYNNE. (*Dramatically*) Sydney Rose, something tells me he's come back for Diana!

SYDNEY. It's possible. He's staying with his cousins, the Pages. He's just arrived.

MISS WYNNE. (*Distractedly*) Heavens! Diana should be told that he's here, shouldn't she? Or should she? What is one to do? Does she want to see him? Or doesn't she? My dear, if I could do anything on earth to bring those two together again, I'd——

KIZZY. (*A trim, neat, colored maid enters*) Miss Annie, Ma'am——

MISS WYNNE. Well, Kizzie, what is it?

KIZZY. It's Colin, Miss Annie. He got one of them partic'lar delivery letters fo' Miss Diana and he won't give it to nobody but you all. He act like if Ah teches it, Ah gwine to eat it.

MISS WYNNE. Is Colin there?

KIZZY. Oh, he there all right—him and his let-tah.

MISS WYNNE. Tell him to come in; and, Kizzy, take away the coffee-tray.

KIZZY. Yes'm. (*Speaking to COLIN, the colored gardener, outside*) Miss Annie say come in. (*Crosses to table for coffee-tray.*)

COLIN. (*Entering; respectfully*) Evenin', Miss Annie—Miss Sydney. Dis hyah specially lettah—it's fo' Miss Diana. Ah ain't takin' no chances on breakin' de law by giving' it to nobody—(*With a look at KIZZY*)—what ain't qualified to receive it.

SYDNEY. (*Smiling*) Right you are, Colin.

MISS WYNNE. Thank you, Colin. Miss Diana is walking about, in the garden, I think. I'll take it.

COLIN. (*Giving her the letter and crossing to door*) Yas'm. Ah's always been taught to regard them specially lettahs with de utmost ree-spec'. Ah wishes you-all ladies good-evening. (*Turning to KIZZY, who is following him out of the room with the tray—in an undertone*) What for you say Ah cain't bring in dat lettah? *

KIZZY. (*As they exit*) Git along, Colin, you look so dirty in de drawin'-room.

SYDNEY. Who's the "specially" letter from, Annie Moore?

MISS WYNNE. (*Putting the letter on the table*) From the Italian Embassy in Washington.

SYDNEY. (*Going up to the window*) Oh!

MISS WYNNE. Perhaps it's something about Scippi Varelli.

SYDNEY. Perhaps.

MISS WYNNE. (*Dramatically*) Great Heavens, Sydney!

SYDNEY. (*Startled*) What?

MISS WYNNE. You don't suppose it's the news of Scippi's death, do you?

SYDNEY. For a nice woman, Annie Moore, you do think of the most grizzly things! Of course not! If anything had happened to Scippi, his mother would have cabled us. Really, darling, you ought to have married an undertaker!

MISS WYNNE. I expect you're right, dear.

SYDNEY. *What?*

MISS WYNNE. I mean about Scippi, of course.

(*Horried at the thought.*) My dear, do you suppose undertakers talk to their wives about—about what they undertake?

SYDNEY. (*At window*) What else *could* they talk about? Come along, darling.

MISS WYNNE. That thought has killed the moonlight for me! I think, after all, I'll do the "Devil's Delight." (*Placing a small table in front of the sofa and taking up a deck of cards*) Four out on either side—and the ace in the middle, isn't it?

SYDNEY. Yes.

MISS WYNNE. (*Laying out the cards*) I say, Sydney Rose . . . !

SYDNEY. Yes?

MISS WYNNE. Is Di out there?

SYDNEY. (*Looking into garden and coming down to center*) No.

MISS WYNNE. My dear, you may say what you like, but I believe Di has never got over her break with Gregory Farnham. I believe she loves that man still, and I believe that's what makes her——

SYDNEY. Mope?

MISS WYNNE. Well, isn't it? Or is it Scippi Varelli she's after? Or what?

SYDNEY. Oh, I don't know. Anyway she says she hates Italy. Snaps your head off the moment you mention the place. Oh, I'm sick of these calm, home evenings. I'd like a little low-life, I think.

MISS WYNNE. (*Playing the cards*) King of Hearts! There's a delightful man—Gregory Farnham! When Diana got engaged to him last October I was so relieved. I don't see why you and Scippi Varelli couldn't have hit it off.

SYDNEY. (*Laughing in spite of herself*) Annie Moore! Annie Moore! You're a designing old thing. (*Firmly*) I shall never marry!

MISS WYNNE. (*Sadly*) That's what *I* said—and *I didn't!*

SYDNEY. Oh, Annie Moore! And did you want to, after all?

MISS WYNNE. I forget, dear. Red queen—red queen. And then this Farnham, for no decent reason that I ever could get out of Di, suddenly flounces off to explore Asia, or some other malarial spot, and the engagement is broken. Do you know why?

SYDNEY. Not exactly. I gathered it was slightly connected with Di's being engaged to John Arnold at the same time.

MISS WYNNE. Oh, dear, all this has completely whitened my hair! Black knave! Diana never cared a straw for John Arnold.

SYDNEY. No—I don't believe she did.

MISS WYNNE. Then why? Then *why*? I ask you!

SYDNEY. (*Impatiently*) Oh! Don't ask *me*! Ask *her*!

DIANA. (*Enters from garden—a beautiful, rather willful, fascinating girl of twenty-seven or eight*) Ask *who* *what*?

SYDNEY. Oh! Nobody, anything—that's the safest plan.

DIANA. That's what I think, too. Well, house-cats, why not enjoy a little of the moonlight—in the moonlight?

MISS WYNNE. Four, five, six. Moonlight is so beautiful I can't see why anyone wants to move about in it. Seven, eight, nine. There! Anyway I've made a wish on the "Devil's Delight" and if it comes out, I know I shall get my wish. Oh, where's that Heart ace? I believe it *is* coming out.

SYDNEY. Well, Di, seeing you're "drunk, dressed, and highly perfumed," so to speak, aren't you going to the Mayo's dance tonight?

DIANA. No, I just suddenly felt that I *couldn't* go. So I got Kizzy to telephone and say I had a headache.

SYDNEY. Oh, Lord! I give up!

MISS WYNNE. But, darling, *have* you a headache?

DIANA. No. I feel somehow as if—oh, that I just couldn't go—as if something held me here.

SYDNEY. I wish something would hold *me*!

MISS WYNNE. (*Shocked*) Sydney Rose, if you mean that vulgarly, I——

SYDNEY. I do!!

DIANA. (*Laughing*) I expect Syd would do most of the holding. (*Going to writing-desk down left*) Well, now for the Wyatt.

MISS WYNNE. Di, *why* did you say we'd come?

DIANA. To tell the truth, I didn't want to hurt her feelings by saying no. It was simpler to say yes.

MISS WYNNE. Simpler? Death would be simpler than going ten miles in the heat to what that dreadful woman calls her "chateau."

DIANA. Darling, we're *not* going.

SYDNEY. Di, you've accepted—up to the neck.

DIANA. Oh, it's easy enough to get out of it. A nice little note of the "owing-to-a-previous-engagement" sort, and——

SYDNEY. (*Sturdily*) I think it's rotten to lie to people.

DIANA. But, my dear, I *don't* lie—I simply withhold the truth from those who are not fitted to hear it. Now, Mrs. Wyatt is not fitted to hear that Annie Moore thinks she's immoral and that you and I think she's—well, what she is. So she'll have to hear something prettier.

SYDNEY. (*Laughing in spite of herself*) Oh, Di, all the same I——

DIANA. (*Quoting the note she intends to write*) "Dear Mrs. Wyatt, as I am both the culprit and the victim, I have persuaded my aunt, Miss Wynne, to let me write and explain why we can't have the

pleasure on Wednesday to which we have all so eagerly looked forward"—and so on.

MISS WYNNE. I shall not be a party to this.

SYDNEY. Nor I. "Sooner death than dishonor"!

MISS WYNNE. For twenty years I have lived in this house and for twenty years I have striven to keep your feet in the paths of noble womanhood. (*Both girls laugh.*) Oh, you needn't laugh!

DIANA. (*Going to her*) Well, personally, I prefer a comfortable shoe and a lawn to walk on. You and Syd can go to the Wyatt lunch. (*Hugs ANNIE MOORE, disarranging the cards.*)

SYDNEY. (*With a wry face*) Oh, gee!

MISS WYNNE. There, you've mixed them all up! Character, Diana, is founded on truth.

DIANA. (*Easily*) O hang it, who wants a character! All politeness and all kindness are founded on what you call lies and what I call *white* lies—pure white ones!

SYDNEY. Rickety theory, lovey.

DIANA. (*Loftily*) It isn't a theory with me—it's a principle.

SYDNEY. Gosh!

DIANA. I've always thought white lies better than black truths. Ugh, those dreadful people who say, "Now the trouble with you, my dear, is——" and then tell you that your nose is crooked, or your legs are bowed, or that your face is all right but your hat's a sight. I've always thought white lies better and I shall go on thinking so and—and acting on it, till I die! Even if a universe of prigs disapproves!

SYDNEY. May the Lord have mercy on your soul, Diana Wynne!

MISS WYNNE. That a child of mine——

DIANA and SYDNEY. What? ?

MISS WYNNE. I say "Child of mine" metaphorically—should give utterance to thoughts like that—and call them principles! It chills my blood! There,

it hasn't come out after all. I knew it wouldn't. And I've lost my wish. I shall go out and sit on the terrace, in the moonlight. That, at least, to simple hearts, *never* lies. (*She goes out majestically.*)

DIANA. Oh, doesn't it! If I ever met a white liar it's the moon! (*Goes to the desk to write to Mrs. Wyatt.*)

SYDNEY. For once she speaks the truth!

MISS WYNNE. (*Coming back into doorway*)
Diana?

DIANA. Yes?

MISS WYNNE. Are you writing to that Wyatt woman?

DIANA. Yes, darling, this minute.

MISS WYNNE. Well, my dear, I thoroughly disapprove of what you are doing, thoroughly. But as long as you persist in doing it, you can say that I shall have to go to town on Wednesday and can't come to her luncheon. (*She exits.*)

DIANA. (*Laughing*) Mrs. Ananias!

SYDNEY. (*Stubbornly*) I'm going—damn it!

DIANA. (*Sweetly*) Go—and be damned, then, darling.

SYDNEY. Thanks. (*Pause, as DIANA writes.*)
Oh, Di?

DIANA. Yes?

SYDNEY. That universe of prigs you spoke of just now. I suppose you include me in it? Yes?

DIANA. No, I don't. Because you only *think* you think white lies are always wrong.

SYDNEY. Yes, but suppose—

DIANA. Well, then, suppose I give you an example. Suppose you knew a man to be innocent and a mob was hunting him down to kill him, and suppose you knew he'd taken the road to the left. If they asked you which way he'd gone, would you tell them the truth? You know you wouldn't. You'd say he'd

gone to the right every time, because you'd rather be judged for a white lie than for a murder.

SYDNEY. Yes, but that's not exactly the case we're discussing.

DIANA. Well, then, let's choose another. Take Adam, for instance. Wouldn't you respect Adam a great deal more if, instead of whining out, "The woman tempted me and I did eat," he'd lied like a gentleman and said, "I tempted the *woman* and she only took a little nibble"?

SYDNEY. (*Giggling*) I admit I always thought Adam was an awful sneak.

DIANA. You see! Now if he'd told a nice, chivalrous white lie——

SYDNEY. I get the point. But my blessed Daddy taught me laboriously that to tell any kind of a lie is a mistake, as a general rule.

DIANA. But mine isn't a general rule—it's a particular rule. I never lie except to keep from hurting people or to do them a good turn! Never!

SYDNEY. It might just be on the cards that you'll do someone a bad turn one of these days by that little performance.

DIANA. Don't be silly!

SYDNEY. (*Continuing unmoved*) Maybe your own self. What am I to infer, Mr. Watson?

DIANA. (*Irritably*) That you're very tiresome, darling.

SYDNEY. *Gosh!* Sorry I kicked the sore shin. (*A pause*) Oh, Di?

DIANA. What?

SYDNEY. "I have something in my chest—I would get it out—so," as Scippi Varelli used to say. Approach.

DIANA. (*Coming to her*) Well, what is it? I ask you not to be humorous.

SYDNEY. I saw Jim Page at the Country Club this morning.



DIANA. Well?

SYDNEY. He told me Gregory Farnham was coming this afternoon to stop with them.

DIANA. (*DIANA, confused, drops her handkerchief, picks it up. There is a pause*) Well, what of it?

SYDNEY. No what-of-it at all as far as I'm concerned. Thought maybe there might be, though, for you.

DIANA. (*Angrily*) Did you? I asked you never to mention his name to me again.

SYDNEY. (*Impatiently*) Oh, for goodness' sake, don't be so high-hat. You act as if he'd murdered our grandmother. I just thought, considering you were engaged to him last Autumn, that whatever your feelings about him may be now, you'd like to know you'd very likely run into him again. That's all.

DIANA. (*Goes to door and calls*) Kizzy! Kizzy!

KIZZY. (*Off stage*) Yas'm, Miss Diana?

DIANA. Kizzy, come here. (*KIZZY enters.*) If Mr. Gregory Farnham should by any chance call in the next few days, say I am out—out absolutely.

KIZZY. Yes'm, cer'nly Miss Diana. *Absolutely.* (*She exits.*)

SYDNEY. (*Coming to DIANA—gently*) Di?

DIANA. Yes?

SYDNEY. You're quite sure you're not doing anything foolish?

DIANA. (*Coldly*) Quite, postively, certainly sure.

SYDNEY. Oh! As sure as all that? Well, I just thought I'd ask. Think I'll step out and have a go at the beauties of nature with Annie Moore. "A little moonlight in the soul, is very pleasant on the whole." (*Goes out into garden.*)

DIANA. Donkey!

SYDNEY. (*Turning back—mischievously*) I dare say. Oh, Di, if you don't want Greg Farnham, per-

haps I'll take him on myself. Things are rather slow with me just now. (*Goes out.*)

DIANA. Darling, don't be *unnecessarily* vulgar.

SYDNEY. (*Runs back into room again*) Oh, Di, there's a letter for you—special delivery—from the Italian Embassy—on the table there. Forgot to tell you in the heat of argument. Sorry. (*Exits to garden.*)

DIANA. (*Opens the letter apprehensively and reads with growing consternation*) Oh! Oh! How awful! (*Her distress increases—she paces the floor re-reading it—finally goes to window and calls*) Sydney! Syd, are you there?

SYDNEY. (*Rushing in*) Yes, I believe so.

DIANA. Syd, the most awful thing has happened! *Scippi Varelli is well!*

SYDNEY. (*Shocked*) My God!—did you want him dead?

DIANA. No, of course not! Syd—this letter—there's something I've got to tell you—something terrible that's happened—it's about Italy——

SYDNEY. About what?

DIANA. Italy!

SYDNEY. Italy? I've heard enough about Italy. Good-night! (*She goes out into the garden.*)

(*The sounds of voices are heard in the hall—KIZZY'S and a man's—DIANA stops—recognizes FARNHAM'S voice—listens to conversation in hall.*)

FARNHAM. (*Off stage*) Good evening, Kizzy. I'd like to speak to Miss Diana.

KIZZY. (*Off stage*) Good evening, Mr. Farnham. I'm sorry, sah, but Miss Diana is out.

FARNHAM. (*Off stage*) Out? What do you mean?

(*DIANA listens—as FARNHAM nears the door she*

slips out. GREGORY FARNHAM *enters, carrying a bouquet, followed by the protesting KIZZY.*)

KIZZY. (*Excitedly*) But Ah tells you, sah, Miss Diana ain't in. She's out.

FARNHAM. (*A good-looking chap of about thirty-five—a gentleman and a man of the world*) Nonsense—I don't believe it.

KIZZY. She out. She say so.

FARNHAM. Well, she's mistaken. Hoplessly, lamentably mistaken.

KIZZY. Mah Lawsy, she out—outhern out!

FARNHAM. (*Putting down the bouquet and taking a bank-note from his pocket*) Well, I say she's in. Tell her so. Tell her Mr. Gregory Farnham says she's in. (*Slips the bill into KIZZY's hand*) Tell her he says that he's going to sit here for hours and hours—forever—till she appears. You tell her that.

KIZZY. (*Hesitating—looking at the bill*) Mah Lawsy, Mist' Farnham, Ah——

FARNHAM. You tell her what I said.

KIZZY. (*Weakly*) She out! *Absolutely!*

FARNHAM. Well, I'm in. When you see her, tell her I'm in.

KIZZY. (*Departing*) Yes, suh, you's in all right. I never seen a gen'man mo' in. (*She exits.*)

DIANA. (*Suddenly appearing in doorway—icily*) And now that you're in, what are you going to do next?

FARNHAM. (*Rising—speaking as if she were not DIANA*) Oh! What am I going to do next? Obviously wait until I can see Miss Wynne—Miss Diana Wynne. Do you know where she is?

DIANA. (*Playing up to him*) She's out—and always will be, should Mr. Farnham call.

FARNHAM. Yes—so I've just heard. But I rang up the house a little while ago and they told me she was in.

DIANA. I'm afraid you have made a serious mistake.

FARNHAM. (*Amiably*) I want very much to see her.

DIANA. I am quite sure she doesn't want to see you.

FARNHAM. But I've come all the way from Asia for it. You don't suppose I'm going to give up now, do you?

DIANA. (*Forced to reply*) Judging from your unpardonable entrance into this room, I suppose not.

FARNHAM. That's what I suppose, too. Er—er—

DIANA. Yes?

FARNHAM. There is something I want to ask her.

DIANA. Yes?

FARNHAM. I want to ask her if there—there is anyone else—since I've gone.

DIANA. (*Pretending not to comprehend*) Anyone else?

FARNHAM. I think Miss Wynne would understand quite well what I mean.

DIANA. Oh—you mean, perhaps, someone else who has broken into her house?

FARNHAM. No. Not into her house. Her heart.

DIANA. Oh!

FARNHAM. Is there?

DIANA. Why should you care to know?

FARNHAM. God knows why—but I do.

DIANA. I'm afraid you'll have to ask Miss Diana Wynne herself. And she is out, you know.

FARNHAM. Speaking from your slight knowledge of her, should you say there is? Someone else?

DIANA. Well, in view of the fact that she hasn't a club-foot and is not entirely lacking in personal charms, I dare say she has been shown *some* attention.

FARNHAM. I'm allowing for that. Hang it, is she engaged to anybody?

DIANA. Is she *what* to anybody?

FARNHAM. You heard me. Is she? (*He suddenly takes her by the arms and shakes her*) Is she?

DIANA. (*Furious*) How dare you shake me?

FARNHAM. (*Still holding her*) That is nothing to what I'll do if you don't tell me whether she's engaged or not. (*Shakes her*) Is she? Answer me! (*Shakes her.*)

DIANA. (*The answer shaken out of her*) Ye-ye-N-n-n-o-o—— (*FARNHAM releases her. She pats her loosened hair and rearranges her ruffled gown.*) Oh, look at me *now*!

FARNHAM. Well! *That's all right!* Now you go out and find Miss Diana Wynne and tell her that Gregory Farnham has camped in her drawing-room—(*Crosses to chair down right*)—and intends to sit it out on this chair if it takes all summer. (*He sits.*)

(*DIANA hesitates, still rather angry, turns to FARNHAM as if to rebel. He points his finger to the door in a stern, menacing manner and DIANA, rather meekly, goes out into the garden. A slight pause. Then she puts her head in at window, to left of center.*)

DIANA. (*Meekly*) She'll be here presently. (*She enters. In a chilly voice:*) Ah! Mr. Farnham! Good evening.

FARNHAM. (*Rises—bowing formally*) Miss Wynne.

DIANA. (*A pause*) Well!

FARNHAM. (*Crossing to her*) I don't know whether it's well or not. That's what I've come back to find out. I've been away—on a long journey. To get over things; only, oddly enough, I didn't get over them. To get over *you*, to be exact. So I stopped

at the foot of a high mountain I was about to climb and—and——

DIANA. Yes?

FARNHAM. Yes—came back.

DIANA. I gathered that.

FARNHAM. That's what I'm saying. That's why I am here. Because I came back in spite of the fact that you did an unpardonable thing to me. In spite of the fact that you did a pretty ghastly thing to me, I——

DIANA. (*Flaring up*) I? To you? You can say that? And I lower my pride in even allowing you to speak to me after the way *you* treated *me*.

FARNHAM. "After the way I've—?" My good God! Would you mind looking me straight in the eyes and saying that again?

DIANA. (*Haughtily, throwing her head back and staring at him*) I repeat that I lower my pride in speaking to you after the way you've treated me!

FARNHAM. (*After a slight pause*) I must say you are a pretty cool hand, Diana.

DIANA. (*With a burst of naturalness, lapsing from her haughty manner*) Don't call me Diana!

FARNHAM. Don't be ridiculous. I beg your pardon.

DIANA. (*Trying to resume her haughty manner*) All I wish to say is—is—— (*With another burst of natural feeling, she breaks off, and adds vehemently*) You ought to beg my pardon! A thousand times!

FARNHAM. (*Dryly*) Indeed?

DIANA. Indeed, yes! (*In a voice quivering with sincere feeling*) How could you send back my letter unopened?

FARNHAM. (*Slowly—emphatically*) Now, see here. When a man has put his whole faith in a woman and when he finds out from somebody else, the very day she engages herself to him that—she is en-

gaged at the same time to another man—what decent explanation *can* she make?

DIANA. There was an explanation—and a “decent” one—in the letter you refused to open!

FARNHAM. Explanation? (*His feeling begins to show through his forced control*) Why, your engagement to Arnold was known apparently by everyone except me! (*With bitterness*) I heard it at the club, from Arnold himself, at the very height of my—my felicity.

DIANA. (*Sincerely*) Greg, he had no right to say I was engaged to him! None whatever!

FARNHAM. (*Staring at her dazedly*) No right? Do you mean to tell me that—— (*He breaks off and comes closer to her, his manner controlled but much moved*) —do you mean to tell me that Arnold lied? Did he?

DIANA. (*Much moved also*) You might have asked all this last Autumn. It’s too late now.

FARNHAM. (*With a burst*) By God! It’s not too late! Did he?

DIANA. He—he—broke his word.

FARNHAM. (*Watching her closely, after a pause*) Now, how much may that mean—or not mean?

DIANA. (*Passionately*) Why should I let you cross-question me? Do you think I am going to let any man drop me the way you did, and then pick me up again at his lordly pleasure? (*Defiantly*) In a way John Arnold did *not* lie, and in a way he *did*! What difference can it make to you?

FARNHAM. (*Quietly*) Just—everything—— (*A pause.*) I loved you.

DIANA. (*Scornfully*) You *loved* me! And did you give up climbing your old mountain in order to come back and talk over old times with me?

FARNHAM. (*As before, very quietly*) I’ve never stopped loving you.

DIANA. And despising me! And distrusting me!

FARNHAM. Diana—if you ever cared for me—even a little—even if it's all done with, at least, give me back my faith in you.

DIANA. *If I ever cared for you. (Crossing to sofa, in tears)* Oh, how can you hurt me so! *(She sits weeping.)*

FARNHAM. *(With vehemence)* How can you think I'd hurt you? You know I wouldn't! *(Going up center)* I'd like to break your neck!

DIANA. Wouldn't hurt me! Ha! And yet you doubt to my face whether I ever loved you! *(Tearfully)* You have a naturally brutal character!

FARNHAM. I take back what I said. Do you hear? I take it back.

DIANA. *(Scornfully)* As if anyone could "take back" a thing like that! You might as well "take back" a dagger you'd stabbed me with. *(Weeping.)*

FARNHAM. *(In despair)* What have I ever done to deserve this?

DIANA. Men like you—so set and hard——

FARNHAM. *(Indignantly)* Me? Set and hard? If you knew what I'm going through now! Any minute I'm liable to burst into tears.

DIANA. *(With feeling)* Oh, Greg, really? Well, then, I'll tell you exactly what happened.

FARNHAM. *(With feeling)* Will you please? Didn't I leave off exploring Asia to hear it?

DIANA. *(Telling the truth)* Well, then—oh, do sit down! You make me so nervous standing like that! *(FARNHAM sits on the sofa—she starts to sit on chair—decides to sit beside him on sofa—starts to sit—then finally sits on the other end of the sofa. She draws a long breath)* Well—— *(A pause)* Well—— *(A pause.)*

FARNHAM. Well?

DIANA. Well, you know how strange and wild John Arnold was after he got back from the war?

Well, he fell in love with me. I don't mean that's what made him strange and wild—it was that wound he got in his head. He said he'd kill himself if I didn't give him some hope—if I wouldn't try to love him. He begged me to try being engaged to him just for a little while—and when I said I couldn't—he—he cried. Greg, he wept!

FARNHAM. I don't blame him.

DIANA. I—I simply couldn't stand that. I'm as bad as a man about seeing people cry—it breaks me all up. And he'd been such a fine soldier, too, and wounded. Then he said if I didn't try being engaged to him a little—he—he'd—oh, I don't know—something awful he'd do, and—and—I think he really was crazy—so—so—I did say I'd be engaged to him for a day or two and—and—he gave me his word of honor he *wouldn't tell a soul*—and, Greg, this is the absolute truth.

FARNHAM. God, what a mess!

DIANA. Then he went and told—and—the next day—all at once—you—you——

FARNHAM. I asked you to marry me?

DIANA. Y—yes.

FARNHAM. (*Rising*) Then why, in God's name, didn't you make a clean breast of it to me *then*?

DIANA. (*In a choked voice*) I didn't want you to think I was a moron. And, anyway, I forgot it—

FARNHAM. Forgot it!

DIANA. —When you said you—loved me.

FARNHAM. (*His eyes meet hers—he holds out his arms—she rises and goes to him—he gives her a long kiss, and they stand rapturously. After a pause—holding her in his arms*) Di! I nearly lost you.

DIANA. (*Her head on his breast*) I wasn't lost, Greg. (*Looking at him tenderly*) Only mislaid.

FARNHAM. God helping us, we'll never have another quarrel as long as we live!

DIANA. Amen! Oh, Greg! I couldn't bear another. I'd die!

FARNHAM. And no more little whoppers, eh?

DIANA. Never! So help me—Gregory Farnham!

FARNHAM. (*Taking her hands*) Oh, Di, it's wonderful to see you again! My good God, this last year has been long!

DIANA. Long, Greg!

FARNHAM. Oh, Di.

DIANA. Just to think you'll be saying "Di" like that to me all the rest of my life!

FARNHAM. Di, it's awfully hard for me to say things, but would you believe me if I told you it's all true?

DIANA. Darling, I would! *What is?*

FARNHAM. Everything they say about love. All the stars and the moonlight and the nightingales—and little blue flowers—and what makes your heart jump when you see her—and you think you're going to die when you don't—and, oh, Di, even the songs they sing about it. They're true, Lord bless 'em, they're all true.

DIANA. Greg, I can't decide which I'm going to love best—the things you say to me or the things you make me want to say to you.

FARNHAM. Love *me* best, Di—that's how I love you.

DIANA. Angel! (*He kisses her—then leads her to center, facing upstage.*)

FARNHAM. And, as sure as you're born, right there in front of that window is just the place for it.

DIANA. The place for what, darling?

FARNHAM. Why, the wedding-bell, of course. Could you get a nice, noisy one ready for tomorrow?

DIANA. (*Feelingly*) Oh, Greg, if we only *could*!

FARNHAM. Well, it's got to be soon, light of my

life. I'm taking no more chances. (*Suddenly sees his bouquet on the piano—gives it to her.*) We're going exploring together, you and I. And on the way we're going to stop and honeymoon at—now, where do you think?

DIANA. Heaven, Greg?

FARNHAM. (*Laughing happily*) Later, dear, later! Our first go at it will be that place you've always told me was its front door—Italy. (*At the word "Italy," DIANA drops the bouquet in great confusion. FARNHAM picks it up, continuing*) A pal of mine has a villa on Como he's promised to let me have, and—and—and—there we are!

DIANA. (*Nervously*) Italy! Oh! Oh, Greg! How lovely! How divine! But—but couldn't we stay here just for a while at Wynnewood? You see, I—Annie Moore—and Syd—they need me and—

FARNHAM. I need you! No, Italy it is—and you, all to myself. That's settled. Now about tomorrow——

DIANA. (*Weakly*) Greg, I *can't* get married tomorrow!

FARNHAM. That's a great disappointment to me. But the next best thing is this: let's take Jim's car, or yours, or somebody's, put in a sandwich or two, and ourselves, and disappear. I haven't been to Pride's Wood in years. Let's go there and—and—just act engaged.

DIANA. Greg, I'd love it better than life itself! It's the loveliest plan I ever heard of. But——

FARNHAM. Fine! That's another thing settled. Let's smoke a cigarette on it. (*Offering her one.*)

DIANA. Yes, let's smoke a cigarette—no, thanks, I don't believe I care for any. Now about tomorrow, Greg. I'm not quite sure we *ought* to.

FARNHAM. (*Lighting his cigarette—laughing*) Ought to? And us—we—whatever it is—just engaged? You talk like the "Elsie" books.

DIANA. Gracious, I don't feel like them! You see, if we go there for the day, it'll be all over the country that we're engaged.

FARNHAM. Well, I'll wear a mask.

DIANA. Yes—"Miss Diana Wynne found with masked man in lonely wood." That'll be nice.

FARNHAM. You're ashamed of me! Curse you!

DIANA. No, dear, you see I—I thought we'd just keep our little secret all to ourselves, for a week or two, and then——

FARNHAM. Oh, blow the "little secret." I'm going to have two large placards printed—one for the front and one for the back—"I'm engaged! I'm engaged!"

DIANA. (*Laughing in spite of her worry. She pushes FARNHAM down on the piano bench and sits beside him*) But seriously, Greg,—not that I wish to throw any bouquets at myself—but poor Annie Moore can't bear the idea of my marrying and leaving her—it just breaks her heart.

FARNHAM. But she's got Sydney Rose.

DIANA. I know—but for how long? Anyway, it's not the same. Annie Moore'll grieve. *We've* got, as you might say, to prepare her for the news. So, please, sir, let's not say anything at all to anybody about it, or do anything to make them talk—just for a few days.

FARNHAM. (*Seriously*) Di—you aren't worried about anything, are you?

DIANA. Only about being so happy I can't see straight.

FARNHAM. And you're playing square with me? Absolutely?

DIANA. (*Rising—in a hurt voice—crosses to sofa*) Greg, if you can't trust me, I think it will be better for both of us, no matter how we feel toward each other, not to begin again.

FARNHAM. (*Rising*) Di, I'm sorry. Of course,

it's all right—only—— (*Crossing to her, behind the sofa*) There! Have it your way, Diana. I expect that's the right way. (*Takes her in his arms.*)

DIANA. Dear old Greg! Bless you!

FARNHAM. (*Taking her hands*) But look here! Don't I see you tomorrow? This is Monday—*Pink* Monday, not *Blue*! And—by the way—I hear we're all lunching at Mrs. Wyatt's, on Wednesday. We'll see each other there. Nice woman, isn't she, Mrs. Wyatt?

DIANA. How jolly! Yes, isn't she? I was just writing her to say we'd surely be there. (*Miss WYNNE and SYDNEY are seen in the garden talking.*) Let go my hand—quick! There's Annie Moore and Syd. They'll see you. You go right out and speak to them.

FARNHAM. Won't you come?

DIANA. I can't. I've got to talk to the cook about her sick baby.

FARNHAM. Sick baby?

DIANA. Yes. (*Calling*) Sydney Rose, I want to speak to you a minute!

SYDNEY. (*Off*) Coming.

DIANA. (*To FARNHAM, who has taken her in his arms*) Don't, dear, they'll see you. (*Kisses him.*) Darling! I'm so happy I could scream!

SYDNEY. (*Coming in—as FARNHAM moves away from DIANA*) Well, Mr. Explorer!

FARNHAM. (*Shaking her hand*) Miss Sydney Rose.

SYDNEY. Discovered anything new since I saw you last?

FARNHAM. Oh, one or two little old things. (*Looking at DIANA*) A friend of mine is going to show me the front door to Paradise one of these days.

SYDNEY. (*Laughing*) I expect that's as near as any of us will ever get. Oh, Di, you ought to see

that baby of the cook's—it's the sweetest thing that ever was! Annie Moore and I have been at the kitchen door playing with it.

DIANA. (*Hastily, as FARNHAM looks at her sharply*) Why—she told me it was sick.

SYDNEY. Sick—my hat!

DIANA. (*In confusion*) You can't depend on them—it was the sickest baby I ever saw. (*Changing the subject*) Greg, you go right out and speak to Annie Moore. You know how Queen Victoria she gets if men don't pay her attention. (*Calling*) Annie Moore, here's Gregory Farnham!

MISS WYNNE. (*Entering*) Gregory Farnham! Bless my heart! (*Shaking hands*) I haven't seen you in ages! Come out into the moonlight—it's most immoral—but quite safe!

FARNHAM. (*Laughing*) Safe? Oh, Miss Annie Moore! Then I'm not coming! (*As he gets to the door*) Coming, Di?

DIANA. I'll be out in a minute, Greg. (FARNHAM *exits*. DIANA *turns to SYDNEY, anxiously*) Syd—

SYDNEY. Ah, ha! His eyes look all queer and shiny—and so do yours! "The light that lies in women's eyes." Well, I'm against anything that *lies*, myself, but I must say it's rather becoming to you. What's up? "Romantic engagement of Miss Diana Wynne to well-known explorer?"

DIANA. Oh, *don't* be funny! It's no moment for that! I'm nearly distracted!

SYDNEY. Oh, Lord, you haven't quarreled with him again, have you?

DIANA. No! I almost wish I had!

SYDNEY. I give up then.

DIANA. Syd—listen to me! A perfectly dreadful thing has happened! Greg wants me to marry him.

SYDNEY. Well, where does the dreadful part come in? Or am I too young to hear?

DIANA. Syd! You've got to help me! You will, won't you?

SYDNEY. Help you get married? I'll do all I can, of course.

DIANA. Don't, Syd! I feel as if my mind was going!

SYDNEY. You frighten me to death! Get on with it! What is it?

DIANA. I know I can trust you, Sydney Rose—

SYDNEY. I'll do my darndest, dear——

DIANA. (*Facing SYDNEY in desperation*) Syd—what would you do if someone who loved you was dying—and his mother wrote you and begged you to make him die happy by telling him you loved him, too?

SYDNEY. (*Puzzled*) Why, of course, if I loved him, naturally I'd——

DIANA. I know—but if you didn't love him?

SYDNEY. (*Appalled at the idea*) If I *didn't*? Gosh!!

DIANA. That's what Caroline Varelli wrote three months ago and asked me to do for her boy—for Scippi.

SYDNEY. Oh!

DIANA. She said that the doctors had decided he couldn't possibly live—and that Scippi said he didn't want to get well because I didn't love him. She said her heart was breaking—that if I loved her at all I would do that, much for her only son—who was dying. You know I would do anything in the world for Caroline. Could *you* have refused?

SYDNEY. (*Slowly*) So that was it.

DIANA. Could *you* have refused? I couldn't. He was dying.

SYDNEY. You mean—you really did it?

DIANA. Yes—I did it.

SYDNEY. (*In measured tones*) You wrote and told him—you loved him—when you didn't?

DIANA. No. I cabled.

SYDNEY. (*Astonished*) You cabled!

DIANA. I cabled Caroline to tell him. Do you think if I'd made up my mind that poor Scippi should die happy, I was going to take any chances about his dying *un-happy*?

SYDNEY. (*With meaning*) No—you wouldn't. Well?

DIANA. I wrote to him, too—I had to—quite often. Of course, I asked both him and Caroline not to mention it to a soul.

SYDNEY. I see. You wrote him—love letters.

DIANA. (*Nervous and wretched*) No, no! Not love letters—just affectionate letters—you know—ideal—— (*She breaks off suddenly.*) Oh, don't stare at me like that! And, for Heaven's sake, don't reproach me! What I'm suffering now is punishment enough. Besides—I haven't told you the worst!

SYDNEY. (*With sarcasm*) Oh! Haven't you?

DIANA. Syd—Scippi sailed for America the first of May!

SYDNEY. He sailed—for here? How do you know that?

DIANA. (*Showing the letter*) This letter. This special delivery. It's from Scippi's uncle—the Marchese—you know—the Italian Ambassador. Telling me that Scippi is coming to Washington—and——

SYDNEY. That'll be nice for you—and Greg.

DIANA. Oh! I expect he's there now. Scippi's gone and told his uncle everything. And the Marchese says they're coming here together to make "the formal proposal for my hand"! Oh, my God!

SYDNEY. (*Slowly*) You haven't, I take it, told Gregory Farnham this?

DIANA. Are you mad?

SYDNEY. Going to?



DIANA. Never! Never! Never!

(FARNHAM and MISS WYNNE are heard laughing in the garden.)

SYDNEY. What *are* you going to do?

DIANA. Do? For one thing, I'm going to Washington by the first train tomorrow.

SYDNEY. And tell Scippi the truth? Poor Scippi! It was so ungentlemanly of him not to die, wasn't it?

DIANA. (*Miserably*) Oh, don't say those terrible things! I thought I was acting for the best. Now I've got to tell him that—— Oh, poor Scippi!

SYDNEY. And poor Gregory Farnham.

DIANA. (*Terrified*) Why do you say that? Greg will never know a word of this. I should die if he did! Not that I am ashamed of it—only—he *can't* know now. I'll tell him I have to go to Washington tomorrow to see Mother, who's ill or something, and——

SYDNEY. Oh, Di, don't tell any more lies. *Don't!*

DIANA. But I *can't* tell him the truth about this! Don't you see? Greg would never understand and—and I'd lose him. Syd, it would kill me to lose him!

SYDNEY. (*Choking back sudden emotion*) Oh, Di, when I think of Scippi—I—oh, it isn't fair! It isn't fair!

DIANA. (*Wretchedly*) It's awful! When I think of facing that dear, splendid boy with the truth, I wish I were dead! Oh, why do things happen like this?

SYDNEY. Yes, why do they?

DIANA. It's all a horrible mistake anyway! Scippi doesn't really love me.

SYDNEY. (*Unable to believe her ears*) What?

DIANA. Of course he doesn't. It's only a delusion of his illness—an hallucination of fever.

SYDNEY. You appall me—absolutely appall me!

DIANA. I *know* he doesn't! Why, Syd, he used to talk to me all the time about you!

SYDNEY. (*Scornfully*) Rats—is my answer to that—plain *rats*!

DIANA. Why, Syd, that winter in Washington, I was sure he was awfully taken with you.

SYDNEY. (*Angrily*) See here, Di, I'll stand a good deal, but——

DIANA. And his mother thought so, too.

SYDNEY. (*Hotly*) You all seem to have discussed me pretty darned freely!

DIANA. It was only because we are all so fond of you, darling.

SYDNEY. (*Incoherent with rage*) Oh—oh—oh—I never heard such cheek!

DIANA. (*Cajolingly*) Syd, won't you come with me to Washington tomorrow?

SYDNEY. (*Dangerously calm*) And why?

DIANA. (*With conviction*) Because I'm sure that Scippi will come to his senses the moment he sees you.

SYDNEY. (*Exploding*) And do you actually expect me to play the goat for you while you step off and marry Greg Farnham? I'm damned if I do!

DIANA. (*Sincerely*) Syd, how can you treat me so! I'm not thinking of myself—I'm thinking of Scippi. His whole life may depend on it. I was only going to say—to suggest—that—that——

SYDNEY. Oh, say it—say it! Let's have the whole bag of tricks!

DIANA. I was only going to say—that is, I was going to ask you if—if you couldn't—when it's all over, of course, and Scippi is—quite himself again—if it wouldn't be possible—for you and him to—for you and him to——

FARNHAM. (*Calling from the garden*) Coming, Di?

DIANA. (*Miserably*) Yes, Gregory. (*Continu-*

ing imploringly in another tone) Oh, darling, do be quite honest with me—I'm so horribly worried and unhappy. Weren't you ever the least, little, tiny bit in love with him?

SYDNEY. (*Exploding*) No! Never! And what's more, that's a perfectly horrid, outrageous, loathsome thing to suggest to me! And about a fool boy who's in love with *you*!

DIANA. (*Angrily*) You *were* in love with him! You know you were!

SYDNEY. You little beast! (*Passionately, going towards the hall door.*) I hope you'll get all that's coming to you, good and plenty! And some more, too! Yes, and then some! (*She rushes angrily out.*)

FARNHAM. (*Coming in just as SYDNEY exits*) What's wrong with Sydney Rose? Didn't I hear a girlish curse?

DIANA. (*In great confusion*) Hel-lo! Yes, indeed, I expect you did. (*Recovering herself*) It's nothing, really. I was lecturing her about—about a boy she likes—and—she flared up.

FARNHAM. What? Is Sydney Rose in love with someone, too? This house ought to be quarantined.

DIANA. (*Trying to be gay*) Think so? I believe Syd *is* in love—unconsciously. (*Her face grows serious again.*)

FARNHAM. (*Laughing*) Unconsciously? Lord, how dull! Annie Moore, bless her virgin heart, tactfully sent me in and—— (*Seeing her changed manner*) What's the matter, Di?

DIANA. Greg, I have to go to Washington tomorrow.

FARNHAM. To Washington? What——

DIANA. I—I've had an upsetting letter, Greg. Mother is dreadfully worried over something and wants me to come to her.

FARNHAM. (*Downcast*) But—I say, Di—our first day together, too.

DIANA. Greg! Don't! I'll cry! Mother—Mother's in trouble and she's just sent me this special delivery. (*She starts to hand him the letter, then quickly takes it back.*) I just got it, asking me to come and—oh, dear, I am crying after all.

FARNHAM. (*Taking her in his arms*) Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! Of course you must go to her. Wish mine was alive to hear about you, but you can tell yours about me. And instead of a picnic in Pride's Wood, we'll have one in Washington.

DIANA. But, Greg, dear,—how——

FARNHAM. Lord bless you, dear, you didn't think I'd let you go down there alone, did you? I'm going, too.

DIANA. (*Aghast*) Oh—but—Greg—oh, you can't! No!

FARNHAM. What is it, Di? You're making me awfully anxious.

DIANA. (*Wildly*) Oh, please don't exaggerate things! There's nothing at all to be anxious about!

FARNHAM. (*Looking at her keenly*) I'm not so sure about that. You say this trouble isn't serious, yet you talk—and act—exactly like someone who's had a bad shock.

DIANA. (*Almost in tears*) I'm nervous and upset—naturally anything that worries Mother worries me—I—oh, why do you act like this, Greg?

FARNHAM. (*Decisively*) I'm going to Washington with you whether you like it or not!

DIANA. (*Helplessly*) Oh!—Oh!——

(MISS WYNNE enters from garden.)

MISS WYNNE. I adore these calm, quiet, peaceful home-evenings, don't you, Diana? What a tranquil night this has been. I'm sure I don't know why I

say "has been" when you're still here, Mr. Farnham.

FARNHAM. Thank you. As a matter of fact, I'm more interested, just now, in the future.

MISS WYNNE. Youth! Youth! Speaking of the future, Di, I was saying only a moment ago to Mr. Farnham what a pity it is we aren't going to Mrs. Wyatt's lunch, as it seems he's going, too. But—as I told him—you've flatly refused because you can't abide the woman.

DIANA. (*Desperately*) But, darling Annie Moore, what are you saying? You must have dreadfully misunderstood me! I said I was writing dear Mrs. Wyatt we were *coming*. (*Crosses to her—patting her hand.*) Really, dear, I'll have to buy you an ear-trumpet.

MISS WYNNE. (*Gasping*) Well—I suppose I *am* getting deaf and old and feeble-minded. (*Gallantly*) I expect I got her confused with somebody else. You must forgive me, Mr. Farnham, though I know it's harder to forgive old maids than young.

FARNHAM. (*With a meaning look at DIANA*) Not always!

MISS WYNNE. (*To create a diversion*) You're so magnanimous I almost feel like suggesting a mild hour of maidenly—old-maidenly—poker. I simply adore a nocturnal round of jack-pots. There is nothing that attracts good women so much as the semblance of sin.

FARNHAM. (*Laughing*) Di? Shall we take her pearls?

DIANA. (*Coming to her*) Oh, Annie Moore—if you don't mind! I—I'm a little tired and—oh, not tonight, dearest.

MISS WYNNE. (*Regarding her closely*) Child! You look a ghost! What on earth is the matter? Are you ill?

DIANA. It's nothing—that is—I've had rather bad news. Mother's in a mess and——

MISS WYNNE. Aha! So *that* was what that special delivery letter from the Italian Embassy was about, was it? I had an awful feeling, you know, it was about Scippi Varelli. I said at once, "Scippi's dead!"

DIANA. (*In agony*) It was—I mean, it wasn't. Darling, what I mean is I've had another letter. I have to go to Washington tomorrow.

MISS WYNNE. Another letter? Tonight? Good heavens! What's your mother done now? Gambling in stocks again? I expect that's it. She always has these attacks when she's lost money.

FARNHAM. (*To DIANA*) Oh! Is that it?

DIANA. That—and other things.

MISS WYNNE. Well, I'm sorry, dear, but it isn't like you to worry over this. You've been through too many of these outbreaks with your poor mother to get upset now.

DIANA. (*On the verge of tears*) I know. But I'm afraid this is pretty bad.

MISS WYNNE. (*Sitting on the sofa and taking DIANA in her arms*) Fiddlesticks! I know Maria. Did I understand you to say the Italian letter is about Scippi?

FARNHAM. (*Puzzled and curious*) What is Scippi?

MISS WYNNE. Scippi is a very dear young friend of Diana's, you know, and——

DIANA. (*Hastily interrupting her*) Oh, it's nothing much. Perhaps he'll come into the Italian Embassy in Washington this year, his uncle says. It is silly to worry, dear. Come along, Greg. If you're game, let's give this hardened old gambler her sinful round of jack-pots. That's the life we lead here—good works and jack-pots!

FARNHAM. Surely, Di, if you're up to it.

MISS WYNNE. But why should his uncle say that in a special delivery?

DIANA. (*Disregarding her*) Up to it, Greg? I'm above it! I'll go get the table. (*Starts for hall door.*)

FARNHAM. May I help?

DIANA. Yes, the cards and chips are in that little red box. I'll get the table. (*She exits by hall door.*)

FARNHAM. (*Getting the box from the table down right and taking it to center table*) Then you don't think Diana's mother——?

MISS WYNNE. Maria? If I dared bluff at poker as she does at life, I'd be the most successful woman in the country—or I'd be in jail!

FARNHAM. Hmm—dangerous game! Thank heaven, you're spared to us as you are, Miss Annie. I was afraid that Diana—— (*He breaks off—looking puzzled.*)

(*SYDNEY ROSE is seen slowly crossing through the garden.*)

MISS WYNNE. How pretty Sydney Rose looks in the moonlight!

FARNHAM. Ah, waiting for the Fairy Prince, I gather.

MISS WYNNE. Oh, no, Sydney Rose isn't in love.

FARNHAM. (*Realizing DIANA's lie about SYDNEY's love affair*) What?

(*SYDNEY stops in the garden—looking off right—she makes a sudden exclamation—waves her hand—and runs off right.*)

MISS WYNNE. There must be someone coming up the path.

FARNHAM. Yes. Might be the Fairy Prince after all. (*Laughter is heard from the garden.*)

MISS WYNNE. She seems to know him.

SYDNEY. (*Running into the room in breathless excitement*) Annie Moore! Annie Moore! It's Scippi! Scippi Varelli!

MISS WYNNE. Scippi Varelli! Great heavens! Here!

(VARELLI *rushes in, carrying baggage, hat, coat, and stick. He is a dark, good-looking young man of about twenty-two or twenty-three, with an eager, charming manner, and a fund of reserve force and pride—a Lombard of the finest type.*)

VARELLI. (*Dropping his luggage and flinging his arms wide in a very Italian gesture*) *Eccomi! Ec-comi-qua!*

MISS WYNNE. (*Embracing him*) Scippi! My dear boy! Where on earth did you come from?

VARELLI. From there to here. I ride! I fly! I swim! And I walk! (*Looking around*) But, is not Diana——

MISS WYNNE. You walked up here, two miles, from the train?

VARELLI. (*Gaily*) I walk up! I walk down! I walk sideways! I find a leetle garden gate. I enter. Ah, Paradiso!

MISS WYNNE. Practically dying! And he walked!

VARELLI. (*To SYDNEY*) Ah, Mees Sydney Rose—I am so please to be here! Please, you be a little please, too.

SYDNEY. (*Quietly*) I? Oh, I am very pleased! (*To DIANA, who is entering with the card table*) Diana! It's Scippi!

DIANA. (*Drops the card table and sways as if her legs had given way*) Scippi!

VARELLI. (*Ecstatically taking her hands*) Ah, Diana!

DIANA. My dear Scippi! What a perfectly delightful sur—surprise!

VARELLI. (*Kissing her hands—she throws a panic-stricken look over her shoulder to FARNHAM*) Yes! I think I will surprise you. It is for that I let not my mother cable you. But had you not my foolish uncle's letter, letting all the cats out of the bags?

DIANA. Why, no! Letter—what letter, Scippi? You've simply taken my breath away. Oh, the table. (*She stoops to pick up the table. FARNHAM and VARELLI both reach for it. FARNHAM picks it up—leans it against the piano.*)

MISS WYNNE. And isn't it just the happy ending to the perfect day? (*Suddenly realizing*) Oh, Mr. Gregory Farnham—Count Varelli.

DIANA. Oh, I'm sorry!

VARELLI. Farnham?

MISS WYNNE. Yes, Mr. Farnham is an old friend, Scippi.

VARELLI. (*Effusively extending his hand*) I am charm. A friend of Diana's I should like to be a friend of me.

FARNHAM. (*Giving his hand*) Thank you. How do you do?

VARELLI. Grazie! I do fine—fine. *Benone!* Fine! (*He shakes FARNHAM's hand as he speaks*) And you also are very fine, I hope, sir?

FARNHAM. I hope so too. I'm not quite sure.

VARELLI. (*Still shaking his hand*) Ah, but you *must* be fine! We shall all be fine together! *Ecco!*

(*MISS WYNNE looks on with satisfaction; SYDNEY is grave and still; FARNHAM is quizzical and wary; DIANA is in an agony of apprehension.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: *Same scene; fifteen minutes later.*

KIZZY is putting down, on a table right, a large tray of whiskey, sherry, ice, glasses, etc.

The card table is set in front of the sofa, and all except VARELLI are seated about it—DIANA on the sofa, facing the audience; FARNHAM to the right of the table; SYDNEY to the left; and MISS WYNNE below the table, with her back to the audience.

SYDNEY. (*Calling out in the tone of a croupier*)
Messieurs et dames, faites vos jeux!

FARNHAM. My deal. Another blue jack-pot.
(*He puts down a blue chip and begins dealing the first hand. KIZZY crosses above the sofa.*)

MISS WYNNE. Oh, Kizzy, take Loretto out to see the cook. You know how cook loves Loretto.

SYDNEY. Since when?

(*KIZZY takes the parrot on the perch and exits to hall. MISS WYNNE and SYDNEY put in their chips.*)

FARNHAM. (*As DIANA fails to come into the jack-pot—in a warning voice*) "There was once a man in the west——"

DIANA. (*Putting in her chip*) I'm in.

FARNHAM. Actions, my child, speak louder than words.

DIANA. Oh, I always forget to come in—I was thinking of something else.

FARNHAM. Well, now that you're with us, do you open it?

DIANA. No. I don't.

FARNHAM. Spoken with deep feeling, Miss Wynne!

SYDNEY. I open—for three blues!

MISS WYNNE. Oh, reckless modern child!—However, I'm with you! *(She comes in with three blues.)* Sydney, has Scippi everything he needs in his room?

SYDNEY. Yes, I believe so, Annie Moore.

FARNHAM. *(Ready to deal the extra cards)* Cards?

DIANA. *(Firmly)* Four, please.

FARNHAM. *(Dealing them to her)* Drawing to an ace, of course.

DIANA. I am not!

FARNHAM. Thanks! That's all I wanted to know. *(Laughter.)*

SYDNEY. Two—good ones.

MISS WYNNE. Three—preferably alike, my dear.

FARNHAM. The dealer takes three. *(He deals to himself and takes up his hand.)*

SYDNEY. I bet two, round, rich, rosy reds.

MISS WYNNE. The curse of the woman is mine—I've got to see! *(She comes in with two reds.)*

FARNHAM. I raise you two, bold, bad blues.

DIANA. I raise you two more—bolder and badder.

SYDNEY. I'm in. *(She comes in.)*

MISS WYNNE. I'm faint but still pursuing! *(She comes in.)*

FARNHAM. I raise it four—four blessed blues.

DIANA. I raise you *six* blessed blues.

MISS WYNNE. *(Throwing down her cards and pushing her chair against the wall right)* This is no place for a virtuous, unmarried, old woman! Out, out, out!

SYDNEY. *(Throwing down her cards and pushing*

her chair back) Nor for the same but young! Out!

FARNHAM. Six—and six more!

MISS WYNNE. Vultures! Wolves! Has this game no limit?

DIANA. Yes, darling, the moonlit sky!

MISS WYNNE. You'll be homeless under it this night.

DIANA. Six—and ten more.

FARNHAM. Either you are the Queen of Bluff, or—you aren't. Ten and ten more.

DIANA. Ten—and twenty more!

MISS WYNNE. Diana, I forbid you to go on!

KIZZY. (*Rushing in in great excitement*) Miss Annie, ma'am! Oh, lawsy! Lawsy me!

MISS WYNNE. Kizzy! What is it?

KIZZY. Dat parrot—dat Loretto—she got her fits again! She done fly on cook's haid and she clawin' out her brainses! Oh, come quick, Mis' Annie—Mis' Sydney! (*She rushes out.*)

MISS WYNNE. (*Rushing out after Kizzy*) I felt in my bones something awful was going to happen this night. Oh, my poor Loretto!

SYDNEY. (*Following her*) That parrot ought to be psycho-analyzed! (*Exit.*)

DIANA. Oh, that revolting bird!

FARNHAM. (*To DIANA, significantly*) So you're going on? Against me?

DINA. (*Defiantly*) I said ten and twenty more.

(VARELLI is heard off stage gaily singing.)

FARNHAM. Right. But you're not going to get away with it. How many have you there? Ten and——

(VARELLI bursts into the room singing—when he sees them he stops.)

VARELLI. Eccomi again! Now I am with you!

DIANA. Oh, Scippi—there you are!

VARELLI. Sì! I am washed white like lilies and I come back to you! (*Seeing the cards*) Oh, I interrupt something?

DIANA. Oh, no,—sit down, Scippi.

SCIPPI VARELLI. (*Sitting left of table*) Oh, you play games with each other, yes? Teach me that game, Diana?

DIANA. Some other time, Scippi. This is too complicated.

VARELLI. Ah, but I love what is complicate.

DIANA. Well, I don't.

FARNHAM. (*Quietly*) Oh, you don't? I should have thought you did!

VARELLI. Ah, Diana, the games we play together in Italia, eh? You remember? (*To FARNHAM*) I have teach Diana all our Italian games and she—she teach me—

FARNHAM. Indeed!

DIANA. Oh, Scippi, you *must* see the garden in the moonlight.

VARELLI. That is what I would very much like to do, Diana,—if you will show me. (*He rises as DIANA rises, about to go with him.*)

FARNHAM. (*Dryly*) Let's *all* see the garden.

DIANA. (*In confusion*) Well—as a matter of fact—Sydney Rose made me promise I'd let *her* show you the garden *first*. She loves it so,—she practically owns it. People are so funny about gardens, aren't they? I was saying only yesterday to—

VARELLI. (*To FARNHAM*) I see Diana first in our garden on Como. You remember, Diana? (*Tenderly*) Ti ricordi, ti ricordi, quella sera!

DIANA. (*Trying to stop him*) One meets so many people in gardens nowadays. Good heavens, what am I thinking of? Scippi, you must be starving. I'll have Kizzy get you some supper.

VARELLI. But no! I eat myself on the train. I have no room for more. Pieno zeppo! Which mean, sir, in the English, I am fed up.

FARNHAM. I see. That happens occasionally to us all.

DIANA. A glass of sherry, then——

VARELLI. Prego!

DIANA. There's some right there on the table.

VARELLI. Joy is the best wine——

DIANA. Greg, do give Count Sherry a glass of Varelli—— (*Tries to cover up her confusion.*)

VARELLI. No, no, grazie! I have drink joy to be here until I feel—how you say?—teepsy?

FARNHAM. Indeed?

DIANA. Well, there's no law in this country, as yet, against drinking joy. That's funny enough. (*With a mirthless laugh.*)

VARELLI. Ah, Diana, it is wonderful to be here—wonderful.

DIANA. You poor boy! You must be nearly dead. (*To FARNHAM*) Count Varelli has been very ill this winter, Greg.

FARNHAM. Oh, I'm sorry.

VARELLI. Ah, but I am all well again—lo guiro—most well. I get but one small leetle hole in my bosom, and all the idiot doctors make faces and say, "He die!" (*Looking at DIANA meaningly*) Then come the right doctor and——

DIANA. Greg, those Italian doctors are extraordinary.

VARELLI. (*Looking at her—emphasizing his point*) Then come the *right* doctor—and I am cure—cure forever!

DIANA. Yes, he's cured forever. And so completely cured that you get sent to America on a secret mission.

VARELLI. Come?

DIANA. Yes, your mother wrote me all about it.

VARELLI. My mother write you? (*He suddenly sees what DIANA means and laughs heartily.*) Ma si! Of course she write you. Oh, my secret mission she is wonderful!

FARNHAM. Is she? So your government has given you a secret mission? You should be very proud of the honor.

VARELLI. I am! I am! I am sure my mother write you also *that*, Diana. And my uncle, too, he will tell you very soon how proud *he* is of that secret mission.

FARNHAM. Did you say secret?

DIANA. Yes, I did. Count Varelli's uncle is the Italian Ambassador to Washington, Greg. One of the most interesting men I ever met.

FARNHAM. Indeed? (*To VARELLI*) You have been staying in Washington some time?

DIANA. Yes.

VARELLI. Oh, no . . . (*DIANA frantically tries to signal VARELLI to keep from telling so many things which conflict with the story she has told FARNHAM. She drops her fan on the floor—FARNHAM and VARELLI both reach for it—she picks it up and, under the card table, she hits VARELLI's leg to signal him. He jumps—doesn't comprehend her tactics—and continues*) Oh, no. My boat she come to New York only yesterday. Dio Mio! what a tempesta we have almost all over.

DIANA. (*Trying to interrupt him*) Scippi, don't you think—

VARELLI. (*Continuing*) I get in Washington this morning—and I run to my uncle to say "How do you? Good bye!" all in one breathing, and then I fly to—

DIANA. Fly? Did you say you flew here? How perfectly thrilling! He flew here! Do you know, Greg, I've never been in the air.

FARNHAM. (*With sarcasm*) Haven't you?

DIANA. (*Trying to cover her confusion*) Great birds circling they always seem to me——

FARNHAM. (*To VARELLI*) And did you fly up here?

VARELLI. I? Oh, no, no. I do not fly here, Diana.

DIANA. I thought you said you flew.

VARELLI. Ah, no, but my heart—he fly.

DIANA. Er—aren't the Italians wonderful, Greg? The simplest things—just an old journey in a dirty train—they—they put it so picturesquely.

VARELLI. I fly to see is your mother in Washington. I find your mother but just in time, Diana. She go away this same day for a—travel, you say, in automobile.

FARNHAM. (*Who has been watching them both keenly during this scene*) She what?

VARELLI. But she tell me where are you and Mees Wynne and Mees Sydney. So I fly again to get a train for here, but he is a little train and do not come all the way, and instead of finding your house, I am plant down in a cabbage field.

DIANA. (*Hurriedly*) Why, Scippi, mother can't be going away on a motor trip! You must have misunderstood what she said.

VARELLI. (*Interrupting eagerly*) But she do not say! She go! I see her go. Phut-ttt! Like that. (*With a gesture to indicate a speedy departure.*)

DIANA. Well, it's very odd. Because she telegraphed me today to come to Washington tomorrow.

FARNHAM. (*Giving her a sharp glance*) She telegraphed?

DIANA. Yes, she must have wired during the trip. She wants me at once.

VARELLI. (*Despondently—to DIANA*) You go away tomorrow? Oh!

(MISS WYNNE and SYDNEY enter.)



THE STAGE OF THE GAIETY THEATER, NEW YORK, SET FOR ACTS I, II AND III OF
"LOVE-IN-A-MIST"



MISS WYNNE. (*Impressively*) Well, of course—

DIANA. What is it now?

MISS WYNNE. My dear, it's just one of those nights! Loretto has at last sunk into a kind of stupor. She's like a dead thing, or worse.

SYDNEY. (*Drily*) Yes—and you ought to see the cook's head. She's leaving, now.

DIANA. Oh, Syd! She isn't!

SYDNEY. She is. The top of her bean looks like the German trenches—and there are kinks all over the kitchen.

VARELLI. (*Trying to get the situation*) Kinks?

DIANA. Oh, that disgusting creature! I could wring its neck!

VARELLI. You wring the neck of who?

DIANA. Of the parrot!

VARELLI. (*Laughing and protesting*) Oh, poverino! No!

MISS WYNNE. (*To DIANA*) How can you speak like that about Loretto! Oh, what *shall* we do without a cook!

VARELLI. (*Amazed, as all parrots are called "Loretto" in Italy, just as they are called "Polly" in America*) Come! Loretto is the cook?

DIANA. No, Scippi, Loretto is a bird—from Hell! (*She crosses to speak to FARNHAM—he looks at her in such a way that she decides not to.*) Well, I must go and see that mangled cook. (*Going to center door*) She can't leave—and Scippi just arrived.

VARELLI. (*Cheerfully*) Oh, but me, I am like the poor cook. I go, too.

DIANA. What?

MISS WYNNE. Go? Go where?

VARELLI. But to Washington tomorrow.

SYDNEY. (*Ironically*) Ha!

MISS WYNNE. To Washington? What did you say, Sydney?

SYDNEY. (*Starting for center door*) I said *Ha!* (*As she passes* DIANA, DIANA gives her a hearty slap on her back.)

DIANA. But, Scippi—

VARELLI. Si, I go also—on my mission.

FARNHAM. Ah, we'll be quite a little party.

VARELLI. Yes?

FARNHAM. (*Agreeably*) Yes, I am going, too.

VARELLI. (*Ruefully*) Oh! Er—that will be very pleasant.

FARNHAM. Yes, very.

MISS WYNNE. (*Amazed*) You, too, Gregory?

FARNHAM. I'm afraid I must.

SYDNEY. (*At the window*) *Ha!* (*DIANA gives her a furious look.*)

MISS WYNNE. Dear me, what an exodus! Sydney and I will be very lonely. However, we shall have poor Loretto and the cook to look after. And you must all come back to us soon—Scippi—Gregory.

VARELLI. Mille grazie! I shall be charm!

FARNHAM. That depends—on several things. I hope so—certainly.

DIANA. (*Quickly making a decision, for she sees the impossibility of going to Washington with the two men. And now that SCIPPI is here, there is no need for it.*) Annie Moore, the more I think of it, the more I am convinced you are perfectly right.

MISS WYNNE. Do I live to hear those words!

DIANA. I'm certain this is just another of mother's false alarms. "Wolf, wolf." Scippi says she's gone off motoring—

MISS WYNNE. That's Maria all over!

DIANA. So I just shan't go at all, until I hear from her again. It was so sweet of you, Scippi, to come all this way just for *one* night . . . to show us you're well again and to tell us about your mission— He has a secret mission, Annie Moore.

You must come back again soon, when your affairs will let you, and *really* make us a visit. Mustn't he, Annie Moore?

MISS WYNNE. Indeed he must!

VARELLI. (*His jaw dropping*) Ma—ma—but—
Diana——

DIANA. (*Crossing to FARNHAM*) Gregory—I—

VARELLI. (*Behind her—protesting*) Ma—ma—
Diana——

DIANA. (*Turns him and leads him to SYDNEY*)
Wouldn't you like to see the flowers now, Scippi?
Show him the flowers, Syd. (*She turns back to FARNHAM—SYDNEY points casually to the garden—VARELLI gives one quick look out—then turns back to watch DIANA.*) Greg, as long as I don't have to go tomorrow, I thought, perhaps, after all, you and I might do what you suggested a little while ago.

FARNHAM. (*With meaning*) I am very much afraid I shall have to go.

DIANA. (*Coldly*) Of course. Just as you like.

SYDNEY. (*Mockingly*) Ha! (*She goes into the garden.*)

DIANA. Syd! Stop that horrible noise!

VARELLI. (*To DIANA—seeing a ray of hope*)
But—perhaps—if I telegraph to my uncle, he will let me stay a little longer.

DIANA. Heavens! No! He'd be accusing me of throwing a monkey-wrench into the affairs of state.

VARELLI. I do not understand how come this monkey in my business.

DIANA. My dear—I mean he mustn't think I kept you from your duty.

VARELLI. Oh—for that—— (*He snaps his fingers.*)

FARNHAM. You're very fortunate, Count, to have an uncle for your Ambassador. (*Going up to the door—meaningly*) Your "mission" might not be so easy, otherwise.

VARELLI. (*Stiffly*) Will you please explain me the meaning of that, Signore? (FARNHAM *exits into garden.*)

DIANA. (*Scenting trouble*) Well, I *must* go and see that poor cook. And you, Scippi—you must go to bed!

VARELLI. (*Indignantly*) Me? To bed? For what, my God?

DIANA. Annie Moore, don't you think it would be best for Scippi to go to bed?

MISS WYNNE. I certainly do!

VARELLI. But—but—but I am waked up like a owl—I will not sleep for nothing!

DIANA. (*Maternally*) I don't forget how ill you've been, even if you do.

MISS WYNNE. Diana's perfectly right. You've had a long voyage, and a railway journey, and a walk—what a walk! I'll not have you getting ill in Wynnewood. Think of your dear mother's feelings. It will be decidedly better for you to go to bed at once, my dear.

VARELLI. But, my dear Signorina, I could dance for wellness! I feel gay, lively like—what you say?—the hot doggie!

MISS WYNNE. All the same, hot or cold doggie, off with you. I'll go and see that you have everything you need, you dear boy. (*She exits.*)

VARELLI. (*Turning to DIANA*) I feel like the bad little boy what is being punish.

DIANA. (*Soothingly*) No, my dear! The good little boy who's being taken care of.

VARELLI. (*Pleadingly*) I must?

DIANA. You must.

VARELLI. (*Unable to restrain his ardor any longer*) Diana, carissima, adorata, t'amo, t'amo, t'amo! (*He takes her hands and kisses them.*)

DIANA. (*Afraid FARNHAM will return—shakes his hand*) Good-night, Scippi. Come down early in

the morning and I'll show you the garden before you go. (FARNHAM *strolls in from the garden—takes in the situation at a glance.*) And now for the cook! (She turns and sees FARNHAM—stops short—nervously picks up an ornament from the table.)

FARNHAM. Good-night, Count. Perhaps we shall meet in Washington.

VARELLI. (*Haughtily*) I think that will not be. Good-night, sir.

(FARNHAM *turns to go out*; DIANA *turns suddenly to* SCIPPI, *still holding the ornament.*)

FARNHAM. (*Stopping*) Diana—I want to talk to you. (*He goes out.*)

DIANA. (*Very nervous—sees the ornament she is holding—puts it down*) Well, I don't need that. (*Turns to go out.*)

VARELLI. (*Calling her back*) Diana! I have forgot. My mother have sent you a most important letter. (*Searching his pockets.*) Per Bacco! Where have I hide her? (*Finding it*) Ah! Eccola! (*Giving it to her*) For you.

DIANA. (*Who has turned back, nervously*) Thank you, Scippi. I'll read it later.

VARELLI. She is long, that letter. Like a romanzo—very like a romanzo. (*His eyes full of ardent meaning*) For you.

DIANA. Oh, your mother always writes reams. Good-night, Scippi. (*Going toward the door.*)

VARELLI. That letter—she is—for you—alone—

DIANA. Yes, yes, I understand, Scippi. Thank you. I understand all about the letter. (*She exits into the garden.*)

MISS WYNNE. (*Off*) Scippi!

VARELLI. (*Crossly*) Jesu Maria, che donna!

(SYDNEY *strolls in from the garden.*)

SYDNEY. All alone, Scippi?

VARELLI. (*Ruefully*) They have all leave me and put me to the bed.

SYDNEY. (*Sympathetically*) Gosh! Poor old Scippi!

VARELLI. (*Sighing*) Mmmn—poor old Scippi! (*They both look at each other—their faces break into smiles.*) Sydney Rose, I have forget how like your name are you. But now I remember again—Sydney Rose.

SYDNEY. (*Resolutely*) Scippi—I've had a hard day, what with Loretto and one thing and another, and I'm in no mood to be trifled with.

VARELLI. But, Sydney Rose is a very beautiful name—una bellezza, like you.

SYDNEY. (*Firmly*) It's a very silly name, and I'm not going to be made Italian fun of, Scippi. You can can it!

VARELLI. What is "cancanit"? I make not fun. It is you who make joy to look on. Our Italian ladies are all black—but you—you are white like your moonlight, and pink like the coral of Napoli, *Una rosa*.

SYDNEY. I—I think you are horrid, Scippi Varelli, horrid! (*Her eyes fill with tears.*)

VARELLI. (*Aghast*) 'Orrid? Sydney Rose! What do I do?

MISS WYNNE. (*Off*) Scippi!

VARELLI. But what do I do to hurt you, Sydney Rose? Dio, you cry!

SYDNEY. (*Angrily*) Oh, for Heaven's sake, leave me alone and go to bed! (*She turns away.*) You've got troubles enough of your own coming to you! (*Exit to garden.*)

MISS WYNNE. (*Off*) Scippi! You must come to bed!

VARELLI. (*Furiously, bewildered*) Bed—bed!

What is this house that everybody put me in the bed!
(*Exits storming to hall.*)

(DIANA enters by the window, evidently in considerable agitation.)

DIANA. (*To FARNHAM, who is behind her*) No, I shall not walk with you, Greg! I will *not* be insulted in the moonlight. The idea of—of even thinking such things about me, much less saying them! (*She sits down left.*)

FARNHAM. Well, Di, if all this is as simple as you insist it is, what are you getting in such a wax for?

DIANA. A wax! Hah!

FARNHAM. (*Going to the card-table*) However, now we're back, I think I'll just have a look at that famous hand of yours you were betting your shirt on.

DIANA. (*Rushing to him before he can pick up the cards*) You sha'n't! That's not fair! It's not poker!

FARNHAM. (*Holding his hand on the cards*) It may not be poker, but it's psychology. I'm going to get a little insight into your character.

DIANA. I'm getting one into yours! Give me those cards!

FARNHAM. (*Seizing her outstretched hand*) I don't give a damn about the cards! What I want is a plain talk with you and I'm going to have it.

DIANA. You're behaving like a melodrama. Ouch! Let go my wrist! You hurt!

FARNHAM. I do not. Will you stay here, like a lady, and answer a few questions, if I let you go?

DIANA. Why not? Do you think I have something to conceal? (*She gathers up the cards.*)

FARNHAM. Well, anyway, you won't have long,

if I know myself. Now, what has brought this young Varelli here?

DIANA. (*Readily*) You heard him say—a secret mission. (*Crossing to the mantel to get the chip-box.*) Really, Greg, you're very charming when you're cross! (*She returns with the box—gathers up the chips.*)

FARNHAM. I heard you say secret mission. Mission, my Aunt! But he's got a secret, though,—he's bursting with it! What is it? You know. What is it?

DIANA. (*Sweeping the chips into the box*) Gracious! "Woof! Woof!" I suppose you'll beat me if I don't tell another person's secret. If you're going in for insights into character, I must say that—— (*Putting box back on mantel.*)

FARNHAM. You can't evade any more! You've got to the end of *that* rope. Now, you invented the fairy story about the secret mission. Why?

DIANA. Evidently, my word means nothing to you. You might, however, accept *his*. (*She turns the card-table up to close it.*)

FARNHAM. *His* word! He hasn't had a word that you didn't suggest to him. When you didn't prompt, he wallowed up to his neck in fluff. "Some of us all the time," Di, "all of us some of the time," but not me *this* time! (*He folds one leg of the table.*)

DIANA. Greg—if I didn't care very, very much for you, I'd leave you this minute and let you think what you so disgustingly choose. Let me do that. I'm the only one who understands this table. (*She folds the second leg.*)

FARNHAM. And if I didn't care as much for you, by God, I'd let you go! I think I am competent to close up a card-table! (*He turns the table over to close the other two legs.*)

DIANA. You—you're insufferable! I *will* go! Ouch! My finger!

FARNHAM. I didn't touch your finger! Not just yet you won't go. There are several items more. The Wyatt's lunch—lie one. The cook's baby—lie two. (*He emphasizes each item by slamming the table legs shut.*)

DIANA. (*Tearfully*) How can you treat me like this?

FARNHAM. Your mother—lie three. She wrote—she telegraphed—lie four. Our hidden engagement—lie five. I forget the next. And this Varelli affair. Lie fifty-seven—all the vaireties.

DIANA. (*Hotly*) A gentleman would allow me to explain!

FARNHAM. I thank God, then, I'm no gentleman. Now, out with it. What's this Varelli to you?

DIANA. Good Heavens! You're not jealous of that boy, are you? (*She takes the card table from him and puts it behind the sofa.*) My word! I'm old enough to be his mother.

FARNHAM. Even with the best intentions in the world, no woman can become a mother at the age of six. That, I take it, is the difference in your ages. Why, this boy's head over heels in love with you—an idiot could see that. What's your part in it?

DIANA. (*Crossing him to the left*) Men like you don't know the truth when you hear it!

FARNHAM. Weak!—I'm not forgetting the John Arnold episode. Have you been playing the devil, too, with this damned Italian?

DIANA. (*Half crying*) Greg, that's abominable of you!

FARNHAM. Answer me! Have you?

DIANA. Do you think any girl is expected to answer such—such contemptible questions?

FARNHAM. This one is. Answer!

DIANA. (*Sitting on the piano bench*) Sometimes I wonder *why* I love you.

FARNHAM. You may be surprised to hear that I wonder the same thing about you.

DIANA. (*In dismay and wrath*) Oh! (*Her voice trembling*) Then why do you care *what* I do or say?

FARNHAM. (*Furiously*) Because I love you! Damn it, because I love you! And I love you because I can't help it, damn it. And that's the only kind of love that's worth a damn. (*He comes to her with intense pleading—kneels behind her on bench and takes her in his arms.*) Di—Di! Be honest with me! Clear it all up! Let's not spoil our fresh start by keeping things from each other. I can't bear this—this—lying. Let's have the truth, dear, the whole truth. If not—then——

DIANA. (*A scared but resolute look in her face*) Greg, I will. I want to.

FARNHAM. For God's sake, do! I can stand anything on earth but this rotten suspicion that you've deliberately become engaged to me again while you were tangled up with somebody else. That I *couldn't* forgive!

DIANA. (*In terror at his words, and now not daring to make the full confession she had resolved upon. She rises—crosses to center; after a pause*) Greg—Greg—I haven't the—the right to tell you the whole truth.

FARNHAM. What do you mean?

DIANA. You'd better ask—Sydney Rose.

FARNHAM. Why Sydney Rose?

DIANA. Ask *her*.

FARNHAM. Do you mean me to understand that Varelli is in love with Sydney Rose?

DIANA. (*Lightly*) Would it be extraordinary?

FARNHAM. Then what, in the name of hell's back door, is all the secrecy for?

DIANA. Oh—that's just the secret!

FARNHAM. And how do you come into it?

DIANA. I? But, my dear, I don't!

FARNHAM. You don't? Diana, say that again.

DIANA. I—don't.

FARNHAM. Di, will you give me your word of honor this is the truth?

DIANA. (*Desperately; breaking away from him*) Oh, oh, it's hopeless! Hopeless! You believe nothing I say! (*Facing him defiantly*) Very well, call me a liar. Call me a liar and then go!

FARNHAM. (*Quietly; looking squarely at her but in a tone that keeps the words from being brutal*) Diana—to the best of my knowledge and belief, you are, God help you, a liar.

DIANA. (*Springing away from him*) Gregory Farnham! I'll never speak to you again as long as I live! Never! Never! Never! (*She rushes out of the room into the garden.*)

(FARNHAM goes up to the center window and steps into the garden, watching her off. VARELLI enters from the hall stealthily. He does not see FARNHAM.)

VARELLI. (*In a whisper*) Diana? Diana mia? Sei qui? (*Are you here?*) (*He reaches the window and sees FARNHAM—jumps back.*)

FARNHAM. (*Coming into the room; quietly*) Ah, Count! So they didn't succeed in getting you to bed?

VARELLI. (*Still startled*) Ah, Signor Farnham, I—— No, I am not in the bed.

FARNHAM. So I see.

VARELLI. Is—Diana——

FARNHAM. Diana has just stepped out into the garden. She'll be back in a moment, I imagine.

VARELLI. I—I have forget to ask at what hour

in this house they make the morning collation. So I have descended again to—to—— (*He breaks off in embarrassment; a pause.*)

FARNHAM. (*Sitting on the sofa*) Yes. Quite so. (*Pause.*) Beautiful night, isn't it?

VARELLI. Very beautiful.

FARNHAM. Yes, isn't it? (*An awkward pause.*)

VARELLI. Yes, it is.

FARNHAM. So we said. (*Another awkward pause.*)

VARELLI. A *very* beautiful night.

FARNHAM. Yes.

VARELLI. You—you go to bed here, too?

FARNHAM. (*Hastily*) Good God, no!

VARELLI. Ah, you have another bed?

FARNHAM. I am staying with my cousins, the Pages.

VARELLI. (*More cheerfully*) Ah! (*A pause.*) And are they far, your cousins?

FARNHAM. About five miles away.

VARELLI. (*With satisfaction*) That is far.

FARNHAM. Oh—not *too* far.

VARELLI. No?

FARNHAM. No.

VARELLI. Oh! (*A pause. He rises and goes toward the center door.*) I think perhaps I make *una gita*—in the moonshine.

FARNHAM. (*Puzzled*) You what?

VARELLI. *Una gita*—a trip—a promenade . . .

FARNHAM. (*Not wishing him to go*) Oh, Count? What do you say to a little nip—while we are waiting for Diana?

VARELLI. (*Coming back into the room*) A neep?

FARNHAM. (*Cordially*) A drink—Scotch and seltzer.

VARELLI. The Scot? Oh, I am all Americano for the Scot! But I think you have—how you say?—"dry up" in America.

FARNHAM. (*Smiling*) So we have, but there are still a few moist spots—one's right here. (*Going to the table of drinks.*)

VARELLI. Oh, ho! I see!

FARNHAM. This will buck you up. You look a little tired.

VARELLI. Oh, no, I am not tired. I help something, yes?

FARNHAM. Thanks—you might hold this glass while I pour. (*Hands him a tall highball glass.*)

VARELLI. Dio, we drink not this glass full, no?

FARNHAM. I've seen it done. Ice?

VARELLI. No, Grazie. If I drink that I see nothing.

FARNHAM. (*Pouring the whiskey into VARELLI'S glass*) All right, say when——

VARELLI. (*With great rapidity*) Wen, wen, wen!

FARNHAM. (*Pouring his own*) Why, that's not enough to buck up a sparrow!

VARELLI. Like sparrow I begin small—but I come again—like eagle.

FARNHAM. Good lad! That's the spirit! Seltzer? (*Filling VARELLI'S glass from the syphon.*)

VARELLI. Wen, wen, wen! I do not wish you to drown this good Scot—I like him *live*!

FARNHAM. (*Laughing*) That's right, too. We're very fortunate if this good Scot, as you call it, isn't half-drowned already.

VARELLI. (*Puzzled*) Eh?

FARNHAM. Yes, these bootleggers ought to be milkmen.

VARELLI. (*Still uncomprehending*) It is perhaps a joke, yes?

FARNHAM. A thin one. (*They laugh.*) Your health.

VARELLI. (*Lifting his glass*) Many happy returns.

FARNHAM. (*Pausing as he is about to drink*)
Eh? What's that?

VARELLI. Returns of you and me—to this charming place.

FARNHAM. Ah, yes. I hadn't thought of putting it quite like that. (*Raising his glass; meaningly*)
A pleasant—gita.

VARELLI. (*Laughs. They both drink. VARELLI takes out his cigarette case—offers it to FARNHAM*)
You will try? Yes?

FARNHAM. (*Warily*) Italian?

VARELLI. No. How you say—one hundred per cent Americano—maybe.

FARNHAM. (*With a smile—takes one*) Thanks.
You've got the makings of a Congressman.

VARELLI. (*Laughing*) I bet.

FARNHAM. (*Offering match*) Light?

VARELLI. Grazie? (*Lights it; strolls across stage.*) All things in America I adore. All. Everything! Everybodies! Never have I see more *simpatia*, more charming, a lady as Mees Annie and Mees Sydney. Ah! (*With a foreign gesture of kissing his finger tips to an invisible image of perfection.*)

FARNHAM. (*To lead him on*) You forget Miss Diana.

VARELLI. No—I do not forget her.

FARNHAM. You think Miss Sydney Rose is more beautiful, perhaps?

VARELLI. I have not think of it. I do not compare Diana even with Mees Rose. She is one—how you say?—one all alone.

FARNHAM. Yes, I see what you mean. (*A pause.*)
I admire her very much, too.

VARELLI. How could you help? (*After a sip from his glass, he adds:*) You have known her a long time? Yes?

FARNHAM. Off and on—for several years.

VARELLI. Ah? (*He takes another sip and adds lightly*) I wonder you have escaped.

FARNHAM. You mean—?

VARELLI. Escape *only* to admire her.

FARNHAM. (*After a brief pause*) Perhaps I haven't escaped.

VARELLI. (*Straightening; suddenly*) *Prego?* (I beg your pardon?)

FARNHAM. Most men fall in love with Diana—why should I be an exception?

VARELLI. (*Stiffly*) Scusi—I think it is not a subject I like to joke on.

FARNHAM. I am not joking.

VARELLI. (*Looking at him steadily and speaking slowly*) For what reason do you tell me, a stranger, that you love her?

FARNHAM. Excuse me—I have not told you so.

VARELLI. Will you then tell me that you do *not* love her?

FARNHAM. As you've said yourself, you're a stranger to me. Will you perhaps explain by what right *you* ask *me* such a question?

VARELLI. (*Controlling his suppressed excitement*) By what right? It is you, Signor Farnham, who begin this talk. I think I have a right to ask you to end it in clearness.

FARNHAM. (*Quietly*) What is it to you, may I ask, whether I love her or not?

VARELLI. (*With suppressed passion*) That truly is nothing to me! But *this* is much to me, to know why you wish to make me *think* you love her.

FARNHAM. (*With decision*) See here! I'm going to be quite frank with you!

VARELLI. (*Haughtily*) I will not content me with less.

FARNHAM. Then—it is because there's something I'm convinced you know and that I do not—something that I must know.

VARELLI. (*More haughtily*) Must? Caro signore! You say *must* to me?

FARNHAM. I think, Count Varelli, you ought to know that Diana and I are engaged to be married.

VARELLI. *E falso!* False!

FARNHAM. (*Coolly*) You use words carelessly, Count.

VARELLI. (*Breathless with indignation*) You have take liberty with her name! You will apologize to me!

FARNHAM. And why to you?

VARELLI. Because I have right to protect her name. Because she is my fiancée and I do not lie!

FARNHAM. (*Sternly*) Go easy there, my boy!

VARELLI. (*Blazing with passion*) *Vigliacco!* (Meaning "coward.")

(DIANA, hearing VARELLI's "*vigliacco*," rushes into the room.)

DIANA. Scippi! What are you saying?

VARELLI. Diana—please go!

FARNHAM. Please stay! Count Varelli has just announced his engagement to you.

VARELLI. (*Outraged*) *Buffone!* (Meaning "buffoon," a most insulting term.) (*To DIANA*) Go! I settle this with him!

FARNHAM. This is a question only Miss Diana Wynne herself can settle.

VARELLI. (*Hotly*) There is no question to settle, but between you and me!

FARNHAM. (*Coolly*) Oh, yes, there is! The question as to whether she has promised to marry you—or me—or both of us!

VARELLI. (*Losing his control and springing forward to strike FARNHAM*) *Vigliacco! Vigliacco! Vigliacco!*

DIANA. (*Who has thrown her arms about him,*



holding him back) Scippi! Don't! It's all a terrible mistake! Scippi!

VARELLI. (*Rigid with the renewed effort of self-control*) I forget myself. I beg you go, Diana!

DIANA. No, no, leave him to me.

VARELLI. No, no.

DIANA. (*To FARNHAM*) How could you? You know how ill he's been! Leave him to me—I can explain everything.

FARNHAM. (*Coldly*) With pleasure. Begin.

DIANA. (*Aghast*) Begin?

FARNHAM. I said—begin.

DIANA. Greg, will you please go?

FARNHAM. When Count Varelli and I have had the truth, then I'll go.

VARELLI. (*After a pause*) Ebbene, Diana? Speak.

DIANA. I can't—before him. (*Indicating FARNHAM.*)

FARNHAM. You must.

VARELLI. I think it is better that you speak now to us both.

DIANA. But it's so hard to say it. I—I——
(*She breaks off and turns away her face.*)

VARELLI. I wait.

FARNHAM. And I.

VARELLI. What is that man to you?

DIANA. He's—a friend—a—a dear friend.

VARELLI. (*Very low*) So dear a friend that when he order you, you obey?

DIANA. Scippi! I want you to understand.

VARELLI. Be so kind, then, to explain more to me.

DIANA. (*Desperately*) Try not to hate me for it—please try to believe that I—that I'd never have let it come to this—if only I'd dreamed——

FARNHAM. (*After a pause*) Go on—we are waiting.

VARELLI. (*Mastering his rising emotion*) It is hard to believe and understand what I know not. I beg you—tell it to me.

DIANA. (*Incoherently*) It was when you were so ill—your mother thought you were dying—I—she wrote——

VARELLI. (*Breaking in*) My mother?

DIANA. You were dying. You know how fond I've always been of you. You know I wouldn't hurt you knowingly for anything in the world. You know that, don't you?

VARELLI. (*In a smothered voice*) What do you try to tell me? That you no more—love me?

DIANA. (*With a great effort*) In one way I do love you—but—in another—— (*She covers her face with her hands.*) Oh, I can't!

VARELLI. (*Slowly*) You have—never—love me?

DIANA. (*Incoherently*) It was when they said you were dying—I couldn't bear to have you die unhappy—so I—I wrote—and then—and then——

VARELLI. (*Deliberately*) You have—lie to me—from pity?

DIANA. Oh, don't look like that—don't!

VARELLI. (*With mounting rage*) You thought me dying and you make of me a fool, eh? Is that it? You make a fool of a dying man? Is that it?

DIANA. (*In despair*) No, no! I did what I believed was right!

VARELLI. And when you have done that—you can not even wait for him to die—in such hurry you are to run to the arms of the next man!

DIANA. Scippi! How can you say such a thing?

VARELLI. (*His rage exploding*) You are cheap—a cheap woman!

FARNHAM. Varelli!

VARELLI. (*In a broken voice*) And I have adore you like a Madonna. We are proud people, we

Varelli! Not till now has one of us wear the fool's cap!

DIANA. Scippi!—

VARELLI. (*He takes from his pocket a small packet of DIANA's letters. He holds them out.*) I give you back your horrible pity! I give you back your lie! (*The letters fall on the floor. Choking with grief, VARELLI rushes into the garden.*)

FARNHAM. (*After a pause; coldly*) So that was it, was it?

DIANA. (*Wildly*) Greg, don't look at me like that! I've made a horrible mistake, but I love you. I love you with all my heart. I do! I do! (*Without a word, FARNHAM crosses to the door to leave.*) Greg, you mustn't think those things about me. Can't you see I love you?

FARNHAM. (*Coldly*) I assure you it doesn't matter to me in the least. (*He turns and goes out. As he exits, a revolver shot rings out in the garden. FARNHAM rushes back into the room.*) Good God! What's that?

DIANA. (*With a scream, throws herself on FARNHAM*) Greg!

FARNHAM. Let me go! I must see what that is.

DIANA. (*Clinging to him wildly; hysterically*) Don't leave me, Greg! I'm afraid—I'm afraid!

FARNHAM. Let me go!

DIANA. (*In anguish*) Greg! You—you don't think it's—Scippi?

SYDNEY. (*Runs in from garden screaming—her face white with fear and agony*) It's Scippi! He's dead! He's killed himself! Oh, oh! (*FARNHAM rushes into the garden.*)

(*DIANA sinks down in a faint heap on the floor. Sounds are heard in the house—doors opening, people stirring. COLIN is seen crossing the lawn with a lighted lantern.*)

SYDNEY. (*Coming and standing a moment over DIANA*) You've done this! You've killed him! (*She rushes out into the garden.*)

MISS WYNNE. (*Rushes into the room; to DIANA, who is on the floor*) What is it? What is it? What was that shot? (*To DIANA*) Do you hear me speaking to you? Great Heavens, are you hurt?

DIANA. (*Moaning*) No—Scippi—in the garden—shot—

MISS WYNNE. (*Horror-stricken*) Scippi! Murdered! What are you saying? (*She goes up to the door—looks into the garden—comes back into room, wringing her hands.*) Oh, they're carrying him in here! (*She lifts DIANA to her feet and holds her in her arms.*)

DIANA. (*Wildly*) No—no! They're not! They're not!

(*FARNHAM enters, carrying VARELLI in his arms. COLIN behind him, followed by SYDNEY.*)

FARNHAM. On the sofa, Colin.

(*COLIN arranges pillows—helps FARNHAM lay VARELLI on the sofa.*)

COLIN. Po' boy—po, young gentleman—Ah reckon he don fo', Miss Diana.

FARNHAM. That's all right, Colin.

SYDNEY. (*Sinking down on the floor by the sofa*) He's dead—Annie Moore—he's dead—oh, my God!

DIANA. (*Clinging to MISS WYNNE; in a low voice*) He can't be much hurt, is he?

MISS WYNNE. (*Whispering*) Greg—is he—dead?

FARNHAM. (*Who has been loosening VARELLI's necktie and vest*) No—not yet. Telephone for a doctor, Miss Annie. (*MISS WYNNE hurries out.*)

DIANA *sinks on the piano bench.*) Tell him to drive like the devil. *(To COLIN)* Get me some hot water, Colin. *(COLIN hurries out—FARNHAM bends over VARELLI.)*

DIANA. Greg, is—is he—badly—hurt?

FARNHAM. *(Ignoring DIANA; to SYDNEY)* Stop crying, Sydney Rose, and help!

SYDNEY. *(Rising)* I will, Greg. What can I do?

FARNHAM. Bring me some bandages—old linen—anything. Quick!

SYDNEY. *(As she exits)* All right, Greg. *(FARNHAM continues to work over VARELLI.)*

DIANA. *(Swaying on her feet; in a dead voice)* Greg—is he—going—to die?

FARNHAM. *(Giving her a cold, deliberate, cruel look)* It won't be your fault if he doesn't.

DIANA. *(Shrinking as if he had struck her—her hands to her face—hysterically)* You see what happens when I tell the truth!

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: *The same scene. Three weeks later. A lovely June afternoon. The sun is flooding the lawn and streaming into the room. In the flower-bedecked room is a very new, luxurious invalid's wheel-chair at center.*

MISS WYNNE *enters from the hall to inspect the new invalid-chair. She looks it over carefully, nodding approval.*

KIZZY. (*Off stage*) Mis' Annie, cook say please come see if the broth for Count Varelli is all right.

MISS WYNNE. Yes, Kizzy. (*She exits.*)

(*SYDNEY ROSE, in a charming summer afternoon frock, with a gay parasol, enters from the garden. She sees the chair, drops the parasol, looks the chair over carefully, picks up her parasol and exits into the garden.*)

SYDNEY. (*Calling as she exits*) Annie Moore!

KIZZY. (*Entering from the hall, carrying the perch with Loretto, the parrot*) There you is—animal! Ah spends mah life a-totin' you and a-totin' you f'om sunup to sundown. (*She deposits it near the open window.*) An' what Ah get f'om you, parrot? What Ah get? Low talk, parrot, dat's what Ah get. (*Jumping back in alarm.*) Don' you wink dat sinful eye at me! Ah ain't dat kind. No, sah, Ah ain't gwine git mahself in trouble with no parrot, Ah ain't. Golly! (*She sees the wheel-chair and seats herself in it.*)

COLIN. (*Enters from the garden. He is spruced up a bit and has an air of importance*) Git out'n dat chair, woman! Dat ain't no kizzy car!

KIZZY. (*Startled*) Mah Gawd! What fo' you come pussy-footin' in lak dat an' scare a lady out'n her wits!

COLIN. Ah ain't scarin' you out'n yo' wits—yo' ain't got none!

KIZZY. Don't you be so chaunceyfried, niggah! You ain't got none to brag of yo'self. (*She gets out of the chair.*)

MISS WYNNE. (*Off stage*) Colin!

COLIN. Yes, Mis' Annie.

MISS WYNNE. (*Entering; as COLIN pushes the chair to the hall*) That's right, Colin. Bring the chair right out here in the hall. (*COLIN turns to her for instructions.*) Then you can go upstairs and wait outside Count Varelli's door till the nurse tells you he is ready, and then you can carry him downstairs carefully, and put him in the wheel-chair.

COLIN. Yes'm, Mis' Annie, yes'm. It sho'ly gwine be some day fo' dat po' wounded gen'man. (*He exits with the chair.*)

MISS WYNNE. (*Turning her attention to KIZZY*) Kizzy, did you—— Oh, yes, I see you did bring in dear Loretto. The sweet thing has been utterly neglected for these last three weeks, what with Count Varelli's illness and all. (*To LORETTO*) Did his Auntie neglect him? Kizzy, help me move his stand away from the window. If he sees a hawk in the sky, the poor lamb goes into convulsions of terror.

KIZZY. (*Moving the stand away from the window*) Yes'm, he sure do love a fit.

MISS WYNNE. Has cook finished preparing the broth for Count Varelli?

KIZZY. She still at it, Mis' Annie.

MISS WYNNE. Go and see if it is ready. And put it, very hot, in a thermos bottle. He's nearly

ready to come down. The nurse is helping him dress.

KIZZY. (*Departing*) Mah Lawd, it cer'n'ly does seem scan'lous to me—dem treened nusses puttin' pants on de laigs o' nice young gen'l'men! Ah does despise it! (*She exits.*)

SYDNEY. (*Entering hastily, carrying a blue slumber-robe and a clinical thermometer*) Oh, there you are, darling. Isn't that chair a beauty? It was the nicest one they had in the shop. I said to the man, "I want the very nicest one you——" I was looking for that little cushion—the yellow one. I thought perhaps—just behind his neck, you know. (*Looking about for the cushion.*)

MISS WYNNE. Yes, dear. I was thinking the same thing. In fact, I came down to get it and——

SYDNEY. Annie Moore, do you think Scippi ought to go into the garden his first day out? Or would it be better for him to sit here by the window?

MISS WYNNE. My dear, the doctor says the garden couldn't possibly hurt him. It's the most enchanting, mild day—quite hot. "And what is so rare as a day in June?"—Which reminds me, I must get that pink slumber-robe of mine for Scippi's knees.

SYDNEY. Don't bother. I brought my blue one down.

MISS WYNNE. (*Meaningly*) Oh! You're very thoughtful, dear, these days!

SYDNEY. I should think that's the least we could be—after all that poor fellow has gone through—in our house.

MISS WYNNE. Yes, dear, undoubtedly. (*Suddenly*) Sydney Rose, I've had another letter from Diana today—a very disconcerting one.

SYDNEY. (*Coldly*) Oh!

MISS WYNNE. (*A little annoyed at the "Oh"*) Yes—oh! She wants to see Scippi!

SYDNEY. You'd better consult *him* about that, not *me*.

MISS WYNNE. (*Worriedly*) He doesn't want to see her. The mere mention of her name throws him into a kind of delirium. I tried it—tactfully. It was obviously the best thing for her to do what she did—go away to visit her mother, when it was certain Scippi wasn't going to die. But now she's—I deplore the word but it's expressive—she's "hell-bent" to see him. What *are* we to do? And why does she want to see him?

SYDNEY. Why indeed! I should think, after all she's done to poor Scippi, she'd——

MISS WYNNE. Yes, dear, I know. But let's be charitable. What poor Diana did, awful as it turned out to be, she honestly thought was for the best. And, anyway, you can't keep her out of her own house.

SYDNEY. (*Trying to change the subject*) Listen! Aren't they coming down?

MISS WYNNE. Sydney Rose, you may say what you please, but my heart is breaking for poor Diana. If you could read her letters! They would move a granite Indian to tears! The bitter agony that forlorn, repentant child is suffering for what she's done!

SYDNEY. (*Quietly*) Well—shouldn't she suffer?

MISS WYNNE. I never said she shouldn't. But, to my dying day, I'll never forget the night I spent with her when Scippi shot himself. I never felt so sorry, in all my life, for any human being. And just think, she worships the ground that Gregory Farnham walks on.

SYDNEY. Oh, let's not go over all that again, Annie Moore. I'm very sorry for Di. And if she's learned her lesson, so much the better. It was coming to her. But when I think of how she treated poor Scippi—— Oh, there's that yellow cushion.

Drat it! (*She kneels and gets cushion from under sofa.*)

MISS WYNNE. Do you suppose Scippi loves her still? I thought maybe he might have confided to you. Italians are so—so chatty about their love affairs.

SYDNEY. (*Hastily*) He hasn't mentioned it to me! And, what's more, I've entirely given up supposing things! Should you think he'd better sit in the sun or in the shade? I mustn't forget my clinical thermometer. (*Pinning it to her dress.*)

MISS WYNNE. Sydney Rose, I've written to Gregory Farnham.

SYDNEY. (*Politely*) Ah! Congratulations or condolence?

MISS WYNNE. Oh, don't! I've asked him to come to see me. I want to talk to him about Diana.

SYDNEY. Di asked you to?

MISS WYNNE. How can you be so catlike? Di never wants to see him again. If she knew that I'd sent for him—well, she'd tear me limb from limb.

SYDNEY. Then why *did* you send for him?

MISS WYNNE. Because I'm a meddlesome old thing. Di's never heard a word from him——

SYDNEY. How odd!

MISS WYNNE. You can't tell me that Gregory Farnham can calmly go back to his silly exploring—and leave our Diana behind to—to languish.

SYDNEY. I should think that's just what he calmly could do.

MISS WYNNE. (*Sadly*) Well—perhaps you're right. There's nothing strong men secretly enjoy so much, my dear, as to know they're making a weak female languish. It gives them such an opportunity to be noble. But I intend to tell him that he has broken her heart! He shan't enjoy his noble attitude if *I* can help it!

SYDNEY. (*Laughing in spite of herself*) I said

once you ought to have been the wife of an undertaker. I take it back—you ought to *be* the undertaker!

(Voices are heard off stage—COLIN carrying VARELLI downstairs to put him in the chair.)

SYDNEY. *(Running to door)* They're coming down! He's carrying Scippi! *(Running off to hall.)* Colin! Don't jiggle him!

MISS WYNNE. *(Hurrying out)* Colin! I beseech you to be careful!

(Voice of VARELLI off—"Eccomi! Eccomi! O che gioia!" Their voices are heard through the open door in an eager, excited confusion of sounds—warnings, admonition, laughter—until the procession has formed.)

MISS WYNNE. Carefully, Colin!

SYDNEY. Here, give him this!

COLIN. Yes, indeed, sah, yo's heah, all right.

VARELLI. Mama mia! O che bellezza! Che trona ambulante! *(What a throne of a chair!)*

MISS WYNNE. Scippi, dear, are you quite all right?

SYDNEY. Are you sure you feel well enough to go out?

(The procession now enters the room. First comes VARELLI in the chair. He has on a handsome dressing-gown, and is somewhat pale but very gay. The chair is propelled by COLIN. An Italian and an American flag bedeck his chair. He has in his hand a small toy trumpet which he blows from time to time. Behind him is SYDNEY, with magazines, a book, the blue robe, and the clinical thermometer. MISS WYNNE follows

with cushions and covers. KIZZY brings up the rear carrying a tray with a large thermos bottle and a cup and saucer on it. They are all marching as if on parade.)

VARELLI. (*As he is crossing the stage*) The King of Italia he is not more fine on his throne than me in my chair! (COLIN turns the chair to go into the garden and VARELLI calls sharply) *Alt!* (*They all halt.*) I will make a declamation, a speak! Ladies, and good kind Colin: This is the most happiest day of my life! I love everybody and everything! (*Clapping of hands, and from SYDNEY and MISS WYNNE loud cries of "Hear, hear!" "More, more!"*) Avante, Savoia! Which mean, push like hell, Colin!

(*The parade resumes and they all exeunt to the garden, laughing and chattering. They are out of sight of the audience, but they are heard talking and laughing gaily, as they establish themselves on the lawn. After a short pause, DIANA comes into the room, dressed in a traveling costume. She has just arrived from her mother's, having decided to return immediately and tell VARELLI what is on her mind. MISS WYNNE's letters have kept her au courant with his recovery. She appears quiet and subdued, pale and troubled, but perhaps more charming than we have yet seen her. She stands looking about the familiar room, so full of poignant recollections for her. The spontaneous gaiety outside attracts her attention. She looks out at them forlornly, seeing their happiness and realizing that she has no share in it at all. She hesitates, takes a step toward them. Then, suddenly breaking down, she bursts into tears, sinks on the piano bench, and sobs her heart out alone. A doorbell rings once or twice, unheeded by anyone. FARNHAM*

enters and sees DIANA. After looking at her misery for a moment, he tiptoes into the hall. He thinks better of this and tiptoes back. At last he speaks.)

FARNHAM. Will you please not do that! I can't stand it!

DIANA. *(Looking up startled and surprised to see him)* Oh! How did you get here?

FARNHAM. *(Significantly)* You ought to know.

DIANA. I don't know what you mean.

FARNHAM. Do you expect me to believe all this wasn't elaborately prearranged?

DIANA. What was?

FARNHAM. You, alone; tears—enter Farnham—tableau!

DIANA. *(Wearily)* I tell you I don't know what you mean. I—I'm very tired and—and not very happy. Won't you please explain what you mean? Evidently it's something unpleasant.

FARNHAM. *(Sadly)* Oh, Di! It's a singular thing, but the moment you see me you seem possessed to lie to me.

DIANA. *(Sorrowfully)* There wouldn't be much good lying *now*, would there?

FARNHAM. Then what have you got me here for?

DIANA. *(With more spirit)* Got you here? *(Rising—to him)* How did you get here anyway?

FARNHAM. *(Exasperated)* Stop it! I won't have it! Do you hear? Can't you *ever* speak the truth? Do you think that I don't see that this is all a prearranged scheme between you and Miss Annie?

DIANA. What is?

FARNHAM. What is? *(Feeling in his pocket for MISS WYNNE'S letter)* This is! *(Showing the letter—reading)* "Diana is away from home now—" *as we see—"I have something to talk over with you*

which I cannot but feel you should hear before you leave again for those malarial explorations"—and so on, and so on, signed by your Aunt. And you say—

DIANA. (*Drearily*) I know nothing about the letter. If I had, it would never have been sent. I *have* been away. I've just come home.

FARNHAM. Do you expect me to believe that?

DIANA. (*Quietly*) No.

FARNHAM. (*Somewhat lamely*) Oh! You don't?

DIANA. And I don't *care* whether you believe it or not. (*The group in the garden is heard laughing gaily.*) If you have come to see my aunt, I suggest you join them all in the garden. (*Faltering*) Th-they seem very happy out there. Did they know that you were coming today?

FARNHAM. No. Why were you crying here alone?

DIANA. Obviously, as your arrival was uncertain, it couldn't have been to impress you, could it?

FARNHAM. (*Ungraciously*) You might have cried just on the chance—I wouldn't put it past you. Why aren't you out there with them? (*Laughter heard in the garden.*)

DIANA. (*Almost in tears again*) They don't know I'm here, and I—don't—th-think—they want me.

FARNHAM. Don't *do* that! I shouldn't think they would.

DIANA. (*Wiping her eyes*) No—nor I.

FARNHAM. (*Awkwardly*) Well, there's no use, Di. We're as far apart as the poles. I—I suppose this is the last time we shall meet.

DIANA. I have no intention of seeing you ever again.

FARNHAM. I am sailing next week—for Asia—or somewhere.

DIANA. (*Simply*) Greg, I didn't try to get you here today. I never expected to see you any more.

But, since you have come, I'd like to ask you—oh, not to forgive me—but to believe that I'm sorry—and ashamed—and that I always will be. I'm a fool. But I didn't mean to be such an *awful* fool.

FARNHAM. You ask me to believe you?

DIANA. Yes.

FARNHAM. Somehow, hang it, against my will, you *make* me believe you. It's very annoying.

DIANA. Thank you. Good-bye.

FARNHAM. Good-bye. (*He starts to give her his hand—then suddenly turns and goes out. DIANA turns away. FARNHAM suddenly bursts in again.*) Damn it—damn it—damn it! I *can't* go! I want to go and I *can't*! I disapprove of you thoroughly. I think you're a lost woman. I don't know what I don't think of you! And I want to marry you. By God, I *will* marry you—and make a man of you.

DIANA. (*Suppressing her feelings with an effort*) No—no, you won't!

FARNHAM. (*Excitedly*) Why won't I, I'd like to know?

DIANA. Because—I—I don't love you any more.

FARNHAM. (*Hotly*) You lie!

DIANA. I don't lie!

FARNHAM. You couldn't tell the truth to save your life. You *do* love me!

DIANA. I don't!

FARNHAM. (*Vehemently*) Liar! Liar!

(*The group in the garden are heard returning to the house.*)

DIANA. I'm not! I *don't*! I don't! I don't! (*She sees the group approaching across the lawn.*) Oh! They're coming in here! Oh, he mustn't see me here with you! Greg! Please don't tell them I'm home! (*She runs precipitately out of the room, leaving FARNHAM.*)

MISS WYNNE. (*Outside the door*) Mind the step, Colin. There! No, Scippi, no! Not another instant in the garden! I insist on it!

(VARELLI protests weakly. COLIN pushes the chair into the room. VARELLI sees FARNHAM, stops the chair. The ladies pause a moment outside.)

FARNHAM. How do you do, Count?

VARELLI. (*Stiffly*) Grazie. I do fine. Benone. And you are fine, too?

FARNHAM. Thanks—I could be finer.

MISS WYNNE. (*Entering*) Scippi, I insist that you go up to—— (*Seeing FARNHAM*) Oh! Gregory Farnham! Well, upon my word, this is a surprise! (*Giving him her hand.*)

FARNHAM. (*Drily*) Yes, I got your letter.

MISS WYNNE. Sydney Rose! Here's Gregory Farnham! (*As SYDNEY comes in.*) Isn't this a happy coincidence!

SYDNEY. (*Putting down her paraphernalia on a chair*) I'm the family beast of burden. Well, Mr. Explorer——

FARNHAM. Miss Wild Rose——

SYDNEY. It's the name that *makes* me wild.

MISS WYNNE. (*Solicitously*) Sydney, I think Scippi should go up to his bed at once, don't you?

SYDNEY. I certainly do. Colin, push him onward and upward!

VARELLI. (*Firmly—holding the chair*) I will not go to bed! Not for nobody will I go to bed!

SYDNEY. (*To FARNHAM, as MISS WYNNE and VARELLI argue*) Listen to the brash young convalescent, will you?

FARNHAM. I seem to remember that he is not fond of being put to bed.

VARELLI. (*As MISS WYNNE tries to coax him*)

Ma, no! *Please!* Mees Annie Moore! Per Dio! I *must* stay just half-hour!

MISS WYNNE. Sydney Rose, he insists, profanely, that he is going to sit up another half-hour.

SYDNEY. (*Laughing*) Then I, profanely, expect he is.

VARELLI. (*Pleading*) Just one little, innocent, very innocent, little damned half-hour!

MISS WYNNE. Very well, then, but no more. Sydney Rose, you see to it that he goes to his room in exactly half an hour. Colin, come back in half an hour, to carry him up.

COLIN. (*Places the chair down stage left, saying with a chuckle*) Yes'm, Mis' Annie, Ah sho'ly will. But Ah reckon he like to stay heah with the ladies bes'!

VARELLI. Bravo, Colin! I think Santa Claus he bring you a little sock *before* Christmas come, I think so.

COLIN. (*Grinning and bowing himself out by the hall*) Thank you, sah. Thank you.

MISS WYNNE. (*Artlessly*) Oh, Gregory, I *must* show you the delphiniums! As I so often say, they're like a little bit of "heaven showing through"!

FARNHAM. In that case I should love to see the delphiniums. (MISS WYNNE *ushers him out into the garden.*)

MISS WYNNE. We'll not be long, my dears. Scippi, don't exert yourself! (*She exits.*)

VARELLI. (*Waving*) Adios! A pleasant gita to you in the flowers! (*To SYDNEY*) The good God be thanked they are gone! With that man I am not delightful.

SYDNEY. (*Casually*) Oh, well, it's generally tire-some to see a gang of people.

VARELLI. (*With ardent eyes*) One is not a gang.

SYDNEY. (*Hastily*) Might be. Would you like me to read to you, Scippi?

VARELLI. I could now very much listen to "Romeo and Giuletta."

SYDNEY. (*With decision*) Not from me, you couldn't. Shall we do a cross-word puzzle?

VARELLI. No—I like not the cross words with ladies.

SYDNEY. A nice bit of jazz then?

VARELLI. No—I feel not the jazz.

SYDNEY. Well, I give up. That's all my tricks.

VARELLI. (*Feigning pain*) Oh!

SYDNEY. (*Coming to him*) Scippi! What is it?

VARELLI. The heart. He beat—— (*Beating the chair*) So.

SYDNEY. (*Alarmed*) Oh, dear! I *knew* you ought to have gone to bed!

VARELLI. Bed? He is better now.

SYDNEY. Are you sure?

VARELLI. Ha! If I was only so sure of something else! (*Moving his legs restlessly*) My legs would run and kick. I think I get from this chair. (*Starting to rise.*)

SYDNEY. Scippi Varelli! Don't you dare! I'll call Annie Moore and Gregory Farnham!

VARELLI. (*Subsiding*) I am like a dead. (*Posing rigidly*) I wink not even the eye.

SYDNEY. (*Laughing*) Good job! Honestly, do you think you could walk a little?

VARELLI. Walk a little? I dance! Lend me one of your arms. (*He takes SYDNEY's arm and a little unsteadily he stands up triumphantly.*) Eccomi! Scippi walks! (*He puts his arm around SYDNEY and, clinging unnecessarily to her, he slowly moves across the room.*) You see! Is it not—hot mamma? I put down one foot. I put down another foot—and both foot they are so happy!

SYDNEY. (*With satisfaction*) Pretty nifty, Italy! Now we'll sit down.

VARELLI. We make one more voyage together, yes?

SYDNEY. (*Firmly*) We do *not*! We make this port! (*Leading him to the sofa.*) I feel a heavy responsibility.

VARELLI. (*Cheerfully*) That is me.

SYDNEY. (*Seating him, with cushions*) It is. Feel comfy?

VARELLI. (*Closing his eyes*) Oh, Dio! *What I feel!*

SYDNEY. (*Alarmed*) You don't feel faint, do you? You *do* feel faint. Oh, dear, there should be smelling-salts somewhere. (*Looking wildly about for them.*)

VARELLI. (*Ingenuously*) I feel very, very funny when——

SYDNEY. (*Anxiously*) When what?

VARELLI. When you leave me. (*He smiles.*)

SYDNEY. Idiot! (*He closes his eyes wearily.*) Scippi, don't shut your eyes like that. It frightens me to death.

VARELLI. (*Opening them*) I shut them, for they are bad eyes. They tell too much.

SYDNEY. (*Trying to be casual*) They *are* rather talkative. Well, now that they're open, would you like to read the newspaper? (*Taking up the paper from the table.*) Nice, new divorces today.

VARELLI. (*Impatiently*) I will not read. I will speak.

SYDNEY. (*Good-humoredly*) All right, Mr. Coolidge, have it your own way.

VARELLI. Santo Dio, che ragazza! (Holy God, what a girl!) I will get something out of my chest.

SYDNEY. (*Laughing*) Indeed?

VARELLI. I cannot breathe up against it. I take it out. (*With a gesture of throwing something from*

him) I breathe full. Sydney, mia, listen—— (*His ardent voice warns her what is coming.*)

SYDNEY. (*Nervously*) Gosh, Scippi! I forgot to take your temperature. (*Getting out the thermometer*) Here! Open your mouth.

VARELLI. I will not.

SYDNEY. You *will*! Open it!

VARELLI. I will *not*.

SYDNEY. You will!

VARELLI. I bite him in pieces.

SYDNEY. (*Pleasantly*) Then you'll die.

VARELLI. Santa Madonna! (*He allows her to put it in his mouth. A long pause—SYDNEY looking at her watch—VARELLI watching her.*) I must say you I am not feeling friendly.

SYDNEY. You surprise me.

VARELLI. Are you feeling—friendly?

SYDNEY. Never felt more so.

VARELLI. I change that. This friendly feeling—it have not the kick. *Love* is the kick. Me, myself, I am all full of the kick.

SYDNEY. Oh, I don't doubt it. (*Taking the thermometer and reading it*) Good. Normal.

VARELLI. He lies! I am *not* normal. I am super-normal.

SYDNEY. I believe you—poor old Scippi!

VARELLI. (*Laughing*) Ah, but not so poor as he was one foolish night in that garden. Sydney Rose, sit here, please. (*Indicates the sofa beside him—she sits. He is suddenly serious*) I laugh, but it is only not to cry—so grateful I am for what have happened to me. I go down near to death a foolish boy—I come back up to life again a wise man.

SYDNEY. (*Slowly*) Perhaps we've all learned a bit since that night.

VARELLI. (*With deep feeling*) And because I am now wise, Sydney Rose, I learn this: I love you.

SYDNEY. (*Agitatedly*) But you can't—you can't!

Scippi, it isn't true! Why, it—it was for Diana that you—you——

VARELLI. (*Eagerly*) Try to shoot me? Yes, that is true. But I have not kill myself. I kill only that false love of her. In Italia I think I love her surely. I think it till I go a little mad. Then she send me that first lie. I go more mad. Then she write me more lies—madder and madder I go. I get up from my bed before I am all well. I come to America—here—then psst!—the truth! And I go all mad. Complete crazy I go. I think at first I will die from the rage. When I see I do not die, I say to myself, "What? You do not die? You will live in this shame? Vigliacco! I feex you!" And *poum!* I shoot me. I think I am dead. But no! I have only kill my nonsense. I am save—to love you—Sydney Rose. Ah, love me—love me—love me!

SYDNEY. (*Distractedly*) Scippi! Please! You go so fast—I—I——

VARELLI. (*Happily*) Ah, but I must go fast—there is not time enough left of the life to love as I will love you. No, no, you must not laugh. Have you not one little bit of love in yourself for me? (*A pause.*) Not even a little? Oh, Sydney Rose, my heart cry to you for answer!

SYDNEY. (*Answering at last*) Scippi, don't hold my hand—I've got to think!

VARELLI. It is better to *love* than to think. Answer.

SYDNEY. (*Honestly*) Well, it wouldn't be the truth, if I said I don't love you, Scippi. I do. I guess I have for quite a long time. I—I love you.

VARELLI. (*Softly*) Adorata! Say not that chilly "love you." Say "T'amo, t'amo, t'amo"! (*His arms about her.*)

SYDNEY. (*With a little smile*) Oh, I couldn't! It sounds so loose!

VARELLI. (*Laughing happily*) Ma, no! It is not loose. Ah, Rosa mia, mia Rosa! I dream to be marry in this room where my mother she marry, too. (*Leaning toward her as if to kiss her.*) Carissima!

SYDNEY. (*Avoiding him*) Scippi—don't you kiss me! (*She rises and stands by the sofa.*) I'm going to stay here—it's calmer! Scippi, are you sure you love me? (*He moves as if to come to her.*) No, stay there! I've got to think!

VARELLI. (*Subsiding—indignantly*) Oh, my God! These Americans—they *think* love!

SYDNEY. Well, you see, I've gone through quite a little over you, and I don't want to be hurt any more.

VARELLI. I? Hurt you?

SYDNEY. (*With difficulty*) Scippi—suppose, after all, you did—care for Diana. Well, you might. Suppose, if you see her again, it all comes back to you. You say you had a sort of craziness. How am I to know you won't have it again, the other way around, if you see her?

VARELLI. (*Reproachfully*) You can stand there like the clams, and make logic, when I burn with love for you! Oh, Sydney, mia, of what is your heart? Stones?

SYDNEY. Stones? I—I—— (*Almost in tears.*) It isn't *fair* to say such things to me! My heart *isn't* stones. Any girl would feel the same. You say you've loved me always. Yes, and then along comes Di and—and—I'm left behind in a cloud of dust. What's going to prove to me, I'd like to know, that you won't go shooting yourself for her again—or worse.

VARELLI. (*Excitedly*) Anima mia! I—I prove it! *You* I love—not her.

SYDNEY. (*Wiping her eyes*) A fat lot of good, saying it does.

VARELLI. I want never to see her again.

SYDNEY. Yes—and suppose you do?

VARELLI. I tell you with her it is finished.

SYDNEY. (*Gloomily*) They all say that.

VARELLI. (*Beside himself*) Oh, my God! Oh, my dear God! How shall I make this foolish one see where she is blind? Dearest, listen! Never yet have I speak love as I speak him to you. Not all the Dianas in heaven make me feel love as I feel him for you. You say me why? I know not. All I know is this: if you come not into my heart now, for always, I die. This time I die for sure.

SYDNEY. (*Her heart breaking*) Oh, Scippi, don't—I can't stand it.

VARELLI. (*His arms open*) Come to me then. Come!

SYDNEY. (*Desperately*) I can't! I can't!

FARNHAM. (*From the garden*) Sydney Rose!

SYDNEY. (*Recovering herself as best she can*) Yes, Greg?

FARNHAM. Could you leave your patient for a few moments? We want to ask you something.

VARELLI. (*Exasperated at the interruption*) Go. Or he come in here!

SYDNEY. You'll be all right? Just a moment, Greg. Well, I'd better put you back in your chair first. (*She wheels the chair to the center—helps him into it.*) There—you'll be all right?

VARELLI. No! I will not be all right.

FARNHAM. (*Off*) Coming?

VARELLI. Go—he wait for you.

SYDNEY. Well—if you want anything, you—you can blow the little trumpet. Oh, Scippi, I——

VARELLI. (*Quietly*) Addio, Rosa mia, who believe not my love.

SYDNEY. Oh, Scippi, don't!

FARNHAM. (*Off*) Sydney Rose!

SYDNEY. (*She looks at SCIPPI—her heart breaking with love for him—then she turns resolutely to*

the garden) Coming, Greg. (*Exits to the garden.*)

(VARELLI watches her off—starts to blow the trumpet to recall her—decides not to. Really tired, he sits quietly and lets his head fall back and his eyes close. DIANA comes in from the hall. She has changed into a light, cool costume. She pauses a moment, then slowly approaches VARELLI. Evidently overcome by the sight of him in the invalid-chair, she sinks on to the piano bench.)

DIANA. (*In a low, shaky voice*) Scippi—

VARELLI. (*Opening his eyes with a start*) Oh, Dio! (*He half rises—then sinks back, deciding to play up his illness as much as possible in the hope that she will go away.*)

DIANA. Scippi—

VARELLI. (*Very stiffly*) Good afternoon. Excuse that I do not rise—I am still a little weak.

DIANA. Oh, no, you mustn't *think* of trying to get up!

VARELLI. I thank you very much.

DIANA. (*Timidly*) Isn't there something I can get you?

VARELLI. No, I thank you very much. It is very difficult to speak—the voice is still a little weak. Scusi that I close my eyes—they are still a little weak also. I think the others wait for you in the garden.

DIANA. Scippi, I *must* speak to you about . . . about . . .

VARELLI. I beg that you will let everything be as if it have never be!

DIANA. (*Desperately*) But I can't! You don't know what I felt when I saw you that night—I thought you were dead, Scippi, I did, I did.

VARELLI. (*With controlled irritation, ceremoniously polite*) But I am *not* dead! I am much better as before and soon I will be betterer. Except that I am still very weak—oh, *very* weak. (*He lets his head fall back against the chair.*)

DIANA. (*Remorsefully*) I know you are—and it's very selfish of me to speak now—but I want so very much to hear you say—if you can say it—that you forgive me.

VARELLI. (*In a machine-made tone*) Oh, I forgive you.

DIANA. (*Hurt*) But like that? Oh, Scippi, those are just words——

VARELLI. (*More irritated*) I do not know how to say him *without* words. I want to say nothing—I am too weak to say nothing to nobody.

DIANA. (*With the sudden courage of desperation*) Then don't say anything, Scippi,—I'll say it. Only you must listen to me. It's going to be so difficult to say it when you're angry and bitter with me.

VARELLI. Scusi—I am *not* angry.

DIANA. Oh, yes, you are! You wouldn't be human if you weren't—but when I've told you—what I have to tell you—you won't be angry any more—you'll forgive me, I think—*really* forgive me. I did you a dreadful wrong, Scippi. (*She throws herself on her knees before his chair and takes his hand.*) But I am changed now.

VARELLI. (*Worried lest SYDNEY should come back*) I, too, have change. Only please, please, get up!

DIANA. No, no! Not till I've told you——

VARELLI. But you *have* tell me. I feel quite nice to you now—I regret nothing—I *enjoy* that I shoot myself! Only please, please get up!

DIANA. Scippi, it's fine of you to say that—and it's like you. But it isn't true. You do regret—and

I regret. When I saw what a wretch I'd been—what a hateful, foolish wretch—I've got something to say to you—you must believe me—I didn't know until later and then I knew—I love you.

VARELLI. (*In a voice of bewildered stupefaction*)
Santa Madonna!

DIANA. Now you forgive me, don't you? Now we'll help each other, won't we?

VARELLI. (*Still petrified—trying to collect his scattered wits*) I think I feel crazy! I think I faint! I think I call somebody!

DIANA. No, no! Sit down—I'll go for the nurse.

VARELLI. Wait! I do not faint. Better I am up on my legs. (*Getting out of the chair.*)

DIANA. Scippi, remember how weak you are!

VARELLI. (*With passion*) I am *not* weak!

DIANA. (*Soothingly*) Then, if you won't sit in the chair, come and sit on the sofa.

VARELLI. (*Vehemently*) No! No! Never! Not *that* sofa!

DIANA. Why not? It's a perfectly good sofa. I'll sit beside you——

VARELLI. No, I will not have you sit beside me——on *that* sofa.

DIANA. (*Rather impatiently*) Don't be silly! There's nothing wrong with the sofa.

VARELLI. (*Vehemently*) No, there is nothing wrong with him—but I will not have *you* sit beside *me* on him!

DIANA. I'll go for the nurse. (*Starts for the door.*)

VARELLI. No, wait! I have what I must say to you.

DIANA. But, Scippi——

VARELLI. Do not speak for one moment. I must be calm.

DIANA. (*Trying to humor him*) Just as you like, Scippi, but I do think, really,——

VARELLI. (*Exasperated*) I ask you prayerfully for one little minute of silence where to think.

DIANA. (*As patiently as she is able*) Well, I'm not saying anything, am I? Of course, if I'd known you were going to take it like this—— (*She stands watching VARELLI while he goes over to the mantel-piece, and leaning his arms on it, takes his frantically whirling head in both hands. There is a pause, then he turns and comes toward her. He is composed, very dignified and quite himself again.*) Do you feel better now?

VARELLI. (*Indicating the piano bench*) Will you please to sit there? (*She sits.*) What I wish to say is, that I have great appreciation of this great sacrifice you make for me——

DIANA. (*Miserably—interrupting*) But it isn't a sacrifice—I—I enjoy it—I——

VARELLI. (*Formally*) If you please—I prefer to speak myself.

DIANA. (*Subsiding*) I'm sure I don't want to say any more.

VARELLI. What I wish to say is that I can not accept this sacrifice. I am in the profoundest obligation to you—but I can not accept it.

DIANA. But, Scippi, I've told you it isn't a sacrifice! . . . I'll marry you tomorrow.

VARELLI. Ma no! Ma no! It is not to think of tomorrow!

DIANA. Well, whenever you want to, then.

VARELLI. Oh, this is terrible! terrible!

DIANA. Why, no, it's not, dear! We can be married here—very quietly—in this room.

VARELLI. (*Pacing to and fro*) Dio mio! Dio mio! Che fare? (*To her*) Listen! It is quite impossible that I be marry to you—quite impossible!

DIANA. Scippi, you don't believe me—but you *must* believe me!

VARELLI. (*In desperation*) Diana! I am not as

you think—I am otherwise! I am—oh, Dio, I burst—I think I burst! (*With a great effort*) Diana—I regret—but—I do not love you!

DIANA. Oh, Scippi, it's sweet of you to say that—but I know you do love me! (*His eyes fall on the little trumpet—he snatches it up and blows violently.*) Are you mad?

VARELLI. (*Wildly*) Wait! Wait! You see what I am! You hear!

(*SYDNEY rushes in, followed by MISS WYNNE and FARNHAM.*)

SYDNEY. (*Anxiously*) Scippi! What is it?

VARELLI. (*Excitedly*) I must see you! Explain me! I go crazy! (*Sees the others*) Oh, Dio, they all come!

MISS WYNNE. (*Seeing DIANA for the first time—rushes to her and takes her in her arms*) Darling! You! Welcome home! Oh, we have missed you so! Dearest child!

DIANA. Yes, darling, I'm home again—and I'm happy—and everything is all right. (*Disengaging herself.*) And since you're all here—and since you—you all know—know about me—and that dreadful night three weeks ago—I think I ought to tell you all that Scippi and I——

VARELLI. (*Wildly*) No! No!

DIANA. Yes, Scippi!—that Scippi and I—are going to be married. You see, I found out, after all, that it was Scippi I loved.

(*VARELLI, with a groan, sinks into a chair, his head in his hands. There is a moment of utter silence in the room. Then, without a word, SYDNEY turns and goes out into the garden.*)

MISS WYNNE. (*Collecting her scattered wits with*

difficulty) Why—why—how—how very nice! How very—er—nice! I—I'm sure we all congratulate you both and—and—of course, no one ever expects a romance—or perhaps we do expect it, and that's what surprises us so, if we get it. Well, I—I just think I'll step out and speak to Kizzy about our tea. And I do think, Scippi, that after getting well and engaged and everything, all in one afternoon, you ought to go up to bed! (*No one speaks. VARELLI, who has looked up at her, drops his head again into his hands with a shudder.*) Well, they say happiness is the best doctor after all, so—I just think I'll step out and see about our tea. (*She exits to hall. There is a long pause.*)

FARNHAM. (*Moving to leave*) I think, if you will excuse me, I shall not wait for tea.

DIANA. (*Unconsciously*) Oh, yes, Greg, do! (*In confusion*) I mean, of course, I—we—

FARNHAM. (*Quietly*) I congratulate you, Count Varelli, on the happy outcome of your secret mission. I—I did not believe you a little while ago, Diana. I was wrong. I ask your pardon. Good-bye. (*Starting for the door.*)

VARELLI. (*Bursting out—and starting to go into the garden*) Oh! Oh! Oh!

DIANA. (*Anxiously*) Scippi! What is it? Are you ill?

VARELLI. (*Frenzied*) All this is like the dream you call the night-horse! (*He rushes out.*)

DIANA. (*After an awkward pause*) He's worn out, poor boy.

FARNHAM. Hmm. Odd way he has of registering extreme joy!

DIANA. He wants to be alone.

FARNHAM. He looks it.

DIANA. (*Significantly*) Italians feel things very deeply—more so than—than other people.

FARNHAM. (*Gravely*) He's a nice boy, Varelli!

DIANA. (*Earnestly*) Yes—yes——

FARNHAM. And he deserves to be happy.

DIANA. I'm going to do my best.

FARNHAM. Di—Diana—forgive me, but may I say something?

DIANA. (*Faintly*) What?

FARNHAM. (*With deep feeling*) Play straight with him, Diana. Don't lie. Don't ever lie to him. There's nothing that kills a man like—like being deceived. You—you've hurt me—pretty badly. I guess you didn't mean to. I know you didn't. And you've hurt this boy, too—it's turned out all right—from your side of it—and you've discovered that it was Scippi all the time you cared for and—and not me. That's all right. Things happen like that. Only don't ever hurt this boy again, Di. Be square with him and honest always. I don't mean to preach, but—promise me, Di, will you? (*With an attempt at lightness*) And I'll go away satisfied, and pray all the good little Gods, Christian and Heathen, to perch on your doorstep. Promise?

DIANA. (*Bursting suddenly into a flood of tears*) Oh, Greg, Greg, Greg!

FARNHAM. (*Soothingly*) Don't! Don't take it like that! What's done is done! I know you're sorry. But don't cry like that about me—I'm not worth it.

DIANA. Oh—you—you don't understand.

FARNHAM. (*Gently*) Yes, I do. I understand everything perfectly. Come now. Give me that promise—and then I'll go.

DIANA. (*Desperately*) I—I—I—can't——

FARNHAM. Can't what?

DIANA. Can't promise.

FARNHAM. Do you mean you can't help lying to people?

DIANA. I *can* help it! I hate lying! I hate it!

FARNHAM. Then what, in the name of Heaven, is the matter?

DIANA. I can't tell you!

FARNHAM. (*Searchingly*) Di—if you're at it again—if you're concealing something—are you?

DIANA. Don't ask me! Go! Please go!

FARNHAM. (*Worn out*) All right. I'll go. (*Starts for the door.*)

DIANA. (*Wildly*) No—no! Don't go!

FARNHAM. (*Coming back to her*) See here—what's the matter with you? What is it? What damn thing is it *now*?

DIANA. (*Gasping*) It's—something—perfectly—awful!

FARNHAM. Well, I've stood a good deal—I guess I can stand a little more. All right, Di, out with it.

DIANA. (*With pitiful sincerity*) Greg, if you hadn't spoken to me as you did a minute ago, so wonderfully—about playing square and all that—I'd never to my dying day have said a word of this to you or any living soul. But you made me feel so mean and small by being so—so noble, that—— Oh, Greg, I *can't* let you go away exploring all alone, thinking I've told the truth!

FARNHAM. (*Drily*) I didn't get quite as far as *that*.

DIANA. (*Trying to be brave*) Greg, you might just as well know it—I'm a liar. But I have always lied for the best—even if it didn't turn out that way—and that's what I've done now. No decent girl could have done anything else. I'm doing a better thing than I have ever done before!

FARNHAM. (*Bewildered*) Good Lord, what have you done *now*?

DIANA. (*Solemnly*) Greg, will you promise never to tell a human soul?

FARNHAM. (*Firmly*) I will *not* promise.

DIANA. I know you *won't* tell anyway, for it's a

sacred thing. Greg, I told Scippi I loved him—but—I *don't*.

FARNHAM. (*Gasping*) You—*don't*! (*He makes an inarticulate sound of utter dismay.*) Again? You've done it *again*?

DIANA. Can't you see? I *had* to. It was my sacred duty.

FARNHAM. (*In a voice of deep pity*) Oh, you poor girl! You poor, poor child!

DIANA. Don't pity me! I was right, wasn't I? Greg, I *was* right! Wasn't I right?

FARNHAM. Di—Di! Your heart's all right, God bless it! But, oh, God damn your head!

(*SYDNEY hurries in from the garden, going toward the hall door. VARELLI is following her.*)

VARELLI. (*Excitedly, as he pursues SYDNEY*) Sydney Rose—*anima mia—adorata!* It is *you* I love! *You only!* (*He reaches her as she nears the door—turns her to him—takes her in his arms, kissing her.*)

FARNHAM. (*Gazing at them stupefied*) Well—my—great—good—God! Look at that!

(*VARELLI and SYDNEY exit in each other's arms.*)

DIANA. (*Turning to FARNHAM*) Oh—ooo—oh, Greg!

FARNHAM. Di, if you ever lie to me again——

DIANA. It was the last one. So help me God—and Gregory Farnham. (*He takes her in his arms and kisses her.*)

CURTAIN



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